



MEDIA RELEASE

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VINNIES SERVICE MEDALLION LAUNCHES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is giving young people the opportunity to give back to their local communities with the launch of a new service-based program designed for high school students.

The Vinnies Service Medallion (VSM) is a free to join program allowing students in Years 7-12 to demonstrate strengths beyond the classroom by recognising their contributions to community service, leadership, advocacy, and fundraising initiatives through Vinnies.

The VSM provides a clear and flexible framework for students to engage in social justice while acknowledging their impact through a formal award.

“The Vinnies Service Medallion is a great opportunity for young people to complement what they learn in the classroom by gaining skills that can make an impact in the community right now,” said Joy Kyriacou, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Director Programs.

“This is a significant new state-wide program that allows young people to make an impact, do good in their communities and engage with complex issues in age- appropriate ways.

“By creating this new offering tailored for high school students, the Vinnies Service Medallion recognises the strengths of young people and encourages them to stay connected with Vinnies – and with helping others – throughout their lives,” said Ms Kyriacou.

Designed to complement existing service and leadership programs operating in secondary schools, the VSM is being launched across New South Wales following a successful pilot over the past 18 months.

Over 100 students from Catholic Schools across the Sydney Metropolitan region, including Cerdon College Merrylands, St Clare’s Catholic High School, Loreto Normanhurst, Casimir Catholic College and St Joseph’s Gosford participated in the pilot.

“The Vinnies Service Medallion has been well received by students and teachers, deepening their understanding of social justice issues and offering practical opportunities to give back to the community,” said Jack de Groot, Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese CEO.

“The program is led by students and can be adapted for the needs of each school that takes part.

“It’s a great way to instil values that will last a lifetime and make a difference in people’s lives right now,” said Mr de Groot.

Service opportunities available to students participating in the VSM include preparing snack packs, hampers and toiletry kits to be distributed by Vinnies services; fundraising for appeals; volunteering at Vinnies shops or services; and taking part in advocacy projects.



"The VSM will be an impactful platform for students in high schools to action their faith through their 'good works'," said David Gearin, Diocese of Wollongong, Education Officer for Pastoral Outreach, Advocacy and Justice.

"All of our schools are 'to make Christ known to all their students'. This medal not only recognises our preferential option for the poor and that Christ dwells especially in our poor, vulnerable and marginalised - it will inspire and compel them to move actively towards them, to blur the lines of marginalisation and at the same time increase levels of wellbeing and potential for full lives of meaning and purpose," said Mr Gearin.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has over 12,000 members and volunteers in communities across the state, who have supported 100,000 people this financial year.

To learn more about the Vinnies Service Medallion, visit www.youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/vinnies-service-medallion or contact vsm@vinnies.org.au.

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Imagery of students volunteering with Vinnies NSW is available: <https://we.tl/t-UlPwgJDWQV>