



MEDIA RELEASE

7 May 2026

Vinnies Winter Appeal Launches, as Australians Cut Back on Essentials to Stay Housed

More than half of all Australians are cutting back on food, medicine and other essentials just to keep a roof over their head, according to new research released by St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.

A new YouGov survey commissioned by St Vincent de Paul Society NSW shows nearly one in three Australians do not have enough money to cover an unexpected expense, leaving them at increased risk of financial hardship this winter. Gen X (40%) are more likely than Millennials (22%) and Baby Boomers (29%) to lack the savings needed to manage an emergency expense.

As St Vincent de Paul Society NSW launches its annual Vinnies Winter Appeal, the findings highlight growing financial fragility among households already under pressure from rising living costs.

“Too many Australians are being forced to cut back on essentials, like food and heating, while lacking the savings to absorb an unexpected expense this winter,” said Yolanda Saiz, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW CEO.

“We are seeing more people reach out for help because they are just one unexpected expense away from not being able to pay their rent or keep up with basic living costs.”

The impact of these pressures is being felt across NSW, with the Society recording sharp increases in demand for assistance in recent months.

Since July 2025, Society NSW members have supported more than 94,000 people, an increase of 6% year-on-year, and provided over \$12 million in assistance, up 10%.

In March 2026, the number of people seeking help for the first time rose by 16% compared to the same time last year, highlighting a growing number of households newly facing financial hardship. Calls to the Vinnies Assist phone line were also nearly double March last year, suggesting people are reaching crisis point more quickly and more often.



St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is calling on the community to donate to its **Vinnies Winter Appeal** to support an increasing number of people seeking help for the first time, and those facing entrenched homelessness and housing insecurity.

Website: www.vinnies.org.au
Facebook, Twitter & Instagram: [vinniesnsw](https://www.facebook.com/vinniesnsw)

“This winter, more people are turning to us for help, and we can’t do it without the support of the community,” Ms Saiz said. “A donation to the Vinnies Winter Appeal can make a real difference in helping someone stay safe, warm and housed.”

Dame Beverley Kerr AM, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Acting State Council President, said the Appeal plays a critical role in supporting people before they reach crisis point.

“Too many people are just one setback away from losing their housing, and once that happens, it can be incredibly difficult to recover,” Dame Kerr said.

“Support from the community through the Vinnies Winter Appeal helps ensure people can access the essentials they need and, importantly, helps prevent short-term hardship from turning into long-term homelessness.”

Donations to the Vinnies Winter Appeal can be made at donate.vinnies.org.au/winter-appeal or by calling 13 18 12 or at Vinnies Shops. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

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For interviews and images, email: media@vinnies.org.au or call 0417 446 430

Notes to editor:

- *Total sample size was 1,000 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 12–16 March 2026. The survey was conducted online with respondents drawn from the YouGov panel and weighted to reflect the Australian population (18+) by age, gender and region. Significant differences are reported at the 95% confidence level.*