

## Serving Homeless People with Mental Ill Health

Australia is facing a deepening crisis. Over 273,000 people sought help from homelessness services last year, many also struggling with mental illness. Services are overstretched and many people are left without care, shelter, or hope. Many who are homeless also live with serious mental health challenges. Services are overwhelmed, and too many people are left without the help they desperately need.

This year's Social Justice Statement calls us to follow the example of Jesus, who always noticed, listened to, and cared for those on the edge of society. Just as Jesus healed the blind man Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46–52), we are called to see and respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers living in hardship.

The statement shares powerful stories of real people:

Michael, who found new life through care and community after years on the street and battling depression; Sally, who faced deep loneliness and an impersonal health system; Carol, who became homeless at 67 after losing her husband; and Luis, who quietly bore his suffering with dignity. These stories show the human face of homelessness and mental illness. They remind us that everyone has a name and a story, and that everyone deserves to be seen, heard, and loved. We are challenged to go beyond charity and comfort.

The Church must become a place of encounter, where people are not just helped, but befriended and embraced as equals. We must notice those on the edge, truly get to know them, and walk with them in love. The Bishops call for practical action: more affordable housing, better mental health services, stronger support systems, and an end to policies that leave people behind.

But above all, they call on each of us to respond with compassion, courage, and hope. This is not just the work of professionals or institutions.

Every Christian is called to step into the lives of those who are suffering, to befriend them, advocate for them, and journey alongside them.

“The Eucharist commits us to the poor... you have tasted the blood of the Lord, yet you do not recognize your brother.” – St John Chrysostom

As we enter the Jubilee Year 2025, Pope Francis reminded us that we are all “Pilgrims of Hope.” Let us be a Church that brings healing, dignity, and hope. Let us walk with those who are homeless and mentally unwell, not just as service providers, but as neighbours and friends.



# Church *and* Community **Homelessness** *and* **Mental** **Health** **Services**



**St Vincent de Paul Society**  
NATIONAL COUNCIL of AUSTRALIA Inc. *good works*

## ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The St. Vincent de Paul Society helps people by providing housing and accommodation options in each state and territory. These include shortterm crisis accommodation, transitional housing, medium to longer-term community housing, accessible housing for people living with disability and specialist homelessness services.

↗ <https://www.vinnies.org.au/national-council/advocacy/housing-and-homelessness>

Did you know that there are St. Vincent de Paul conferences across the Diocese of Rockhampton

You can find Vinnies in:

- Biloela - sj4715@svdpqld.org.au
- Bundaberg - ihm4670@svdpqld.org.au
- Clermont - sm4721@svdpqld.org.au
- Emerald - community@emeraldnc.com.au
- Emu Park - mi4710@svdpqld.org.au
- Gladstone - olss4680@svdpqld.org.au
- Longreach - sb4730@svdpqld.org.au
- Mackay - olph4740@svdpqld.org.au:  
(food assistance)  
OR office.mackay@svdpqld.org.au  
(housing assistance)
- Rockhampton - sc4700@svdpqld.org.au
- Yeppoon - sh4703@svdpqld.org.au

There is also an online conference that meets virtually once a month for those who committing to regular face to face meetings is difficult.

- St. Joseph's Conference Rockhampton –  
sj4700@svdpqld.org.au

Some centres that are not listed above have stores and other partnerships and initiatives to support those in our community experiencing hardship.

If you are interested in becoming involved in addressing the issues of homelessness, mental health and other challenges within society, please think about how you can assist.

Can you support these conferences via donations of goods?  
Can you become involved in the good works of Vinnies by donating your time to assist as part of a conference?

We'd love to have you on board!

Please contact or visit your local conference to see how you can become involved today.