

MEDIA RELEASE

23 January 2020

Vinnies confirms every cent will go to bushfire victims

The St Vincent de Paul Society would like to assure the community that every dollar raised for the Vinnies Bushfire Appeal will be used to support the people impacted by the fires. Vinnies will not, and has never kept funds from disaster appeals for any other work or cause.

During the bushfire crisis, Vinnies volunteers are on the ground in hundreds of communities across the country, helping people as they deal with the immediate aftermath of fires. Our volunteers live and work in the impacted communities and will stay alongside those people affected for the long months of recovery ahead.

Vinnies has from day one been in communities providing assistance from our own funds and over the past three weeks has been actively distributing assistance from the Vinnies Bushfire Appeal. This includes financial packages; essential items such as food, water, clothing and bedding; and emotional support for those affected by the bushfires.

The Vinnies Bushfire Appeal has raised \$12.5 million to support people impacted by bushfires in NSW, Queensland, Victoria, SA and the ACT. Vinnies has distributed more than \$2.4 million nationally with a further \$250,000 already processed for distribution in the coming days – totalling \$2.65million from the Appeal funds already distributed. In addition, we have disbursed significant amounts of material goods including food, water, clothing and bedding.

The process of assessing people and establishing their need does take some time but we are focused on helping as many people as possible as quickly as we can. As we access more communities and establish need, we are also accelerating the rate of response.

No administration fees are taken from this appeal, meaning the money raised goes directly to the relief and recovery effort.

Vinnies is focused on doing what it has always done - assist people to rebuild their lives as they re-establish their homes, their livelihoods and their spirit. We will provide assistance now and during the difficult months ahead for those people who have lost everything.

Barnie van Wyk, CEO of Vinnies Canberra/Goulburn, has been visiting communities on the far South Coast this week and has reached out to the Minister Constance's office to meet directly over the past two days. Vinnies NSW CEO Jack de Groot visited the South Coast two weeks ago and has also offered to meet Mr Constance next week.

We are committed to standing by our communities, helping them to get through today, tomorrow and for the future. We are so grateful to our volunteers and to the many thousands of compassionate people who have donated to the Vinnies Bushfire Appeal.

People seeking assistance can contact Vinnies on 13 18 12.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 conferences located in individual parishes across the country.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Alyssa Robinson Alyssa.Robinson@vinnies.org.au or 0417 446 430
Rob Crosby Robert.Crosby@vinnies.org.au or 0417 446 430