

## **VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2024.**

*Current 20 November 2024*

The St Augustine's Parish continues to support the Christmas Appeal for the two local Conferences of the St Vincent de Paul Society, in Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga.

Given the ongoing high cost of living, Vinnies see many families in desperate circumstances. Often, they see single mums (and sometimes single dads) who cannot afford to feed both themselves, and their kids – so the parent goes without. Many cannot afford the very high rents for private rental properties – so they allow their electricity and phone bill to escalate to unmanageable levels, with no solution in sight. There is an alarming number of people, many with children, who are in short-term emergency accommodation at local motels for a few weeks, but then have to live in their cars or in a tent.

The local Vinnies cannot help directly with the housing problem, so they ask all of you to take notice, get informed as best you can, and be advocates for those in our community who are in desperate need.

What the local Vinnies Conference does – and has done for many years - is provide food relief and other assistance for those caught in these circumstances. In the past 12 months, they have provided well over \$120,000 worth of food and grocery cards and other direct assistance to families in need. Hence, the request for your help with their appeal with EITHER a money donation, OR a gift card of your choice, from any store in the area such as a supermarket, a department store or a specialty gift shop. If you would like to help, you can leave a donation at the Parish Office. If you want a tax receipt for donations, please complete your name and address details on one of our Vinnies Appeal envelopes.

The local Catholic schools, St Augustine's Primary School, St Francis Xavier Primary School and St John Paul College, also support our Christmas Appeal. In addition, we partner with other Coffs Harbour aid agencies for an appeal through the local newspaper, *News of the Area*.

Finally – two other matters:

The local Conference relies heavily on the Vinnies Shop, which provides the bulk of the funding for their work in helping those in need, so please support the shop with EITHER donated items, OR by shopping there, OR by volunteering some time to help in the Shop.

Secondly, the Conferences need new members. If you have some compassion in your heart for those struggling in our community - and you can work as part of a team – the local Conference would love to have you join them. They need people with a variety of skills and there are various ways you can be involved, so don't be concerned that you won't have the skills. If you wish to find out more, please leave contact details at the Parish Office and the Conference will contact you