

**THE LAUNCH OF THE SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL'S
2012 WINTER APPEAL BY THE HONOURABLE PETER
UNDERWOOD AC, GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA, GUILFORD
YOUNG COLLEGE HOBART, TUESDAY 22ND MAY 2012**

Thank you Mr Hindmarsh for inviting me to the launch this important event, St Vincent de Paul's Winter Appeal. We have recently passed the 350th anniversary of the deaths of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac who were the two saints who inspired Frederic Ozanam and his companions to set up the St Vincent de Paul Society in the first half of the 19th century. Now we are at the start of the 21st century and the work of the Society work is still going strong. But as has always been the case over the last two centuries, the strength of the St Vincent de Paul Society depends on community goodwill and community support.

The economic climate in Tasmania, throughout Australia and in many other countries of the world is not robust at the moment and this means that the demands on St Vincent de Paul will be even greater than they have been in the past. In Tasmania during the last financial year Vinnies supported people in need with nearly \$680,000 in either cash or goods and provided help and hope to thousands across the State. More assistance will be required this year. Last year the Winter Appeal raised nearly \$53,000. This year it must raise more.

The work of the Society is not just about providing immediate relief to the poor, the homeless, the mentally ill, the unemployed and

so on. In accordance with its founder's aims, St Vincent de Paul tries to provide systemic change that will give those who are in need at the moment opportunities for a better life and a hopeful future.

In Australia, the Society has engaged over 40,000 members and volunteers.¹ 'Vinnies Youth', the youth membership of the Society engages young people - like all of you here at Guilford Young College - to put in by giving thought, time and if you can, money to support the work of this great philanthropic organisation. It's all about caring for other people. You know, volunteer work to help others who need sympathetic understanding and a helping hand can be satisfying and rewarding work. The Federal Minister for Social Inclusion² said that "Volunteering connects us, strengthens our sense of belonging and creates positive relationships that build stronger local communities."³ If you give your time and energy to help those who need the help of St Vincent de Paul you will belong to a group of young people who share the same aims of helping the others, and who earn a sense of satisfaction when they see that their work really does make a difference.

So I launch the 2012 Winter Appeal and in doing so urge you all to work hard and give generously recalling the words on the Society's web site "... there's no magic solution to poverty, it takes compassion, commitment and money."

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society_of_Saint_Vincent_de_Paul

² Senator Plibersak

³ http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s02_article/default.asp?nav_cat_id=208