



Meeting No. 3/2026

29 August 2026 | Harden, NSW

Council at a Glance

Key outcomes from the meeting

Priority	Key outcomes
Safeguarding	A short-form safeguarding training option was endorsed for low-risk Members, Volunteers and Employees (MVEs)
Volunteering	A streamlined process for Conferences engaging one-off volunteers, including for Christmas hampers and emergencies, was agreed and will be managed by Conference Support.
Membership	Implementation of the Membership Strategy will ramp up, supported by targeted engagement with Regional Councils and Conference Presidents.
Governance	A Board-endorsed Governance Working Party will review Canberra-Goulburn's Constitution and future governance arrangements.
Vincentian Way	Vincentian formation will be incorporated into induction for Territory Council members, Board directors and senior staff.
NSW regions	A new Far South Coast Vinnies Van and Young Drop-In service are expanding our support for companions.
Housing	Progress has been made in sustaining our support for companions facing housing insecurity.
Advocacy	Greater engagement with elected representatives and stronger use of community case studies will support advocacy.
Financial Sustainability	The Executive is implementing cost controls and organisational reviews to ensure FY2026/27 achieves cash break-even.

Safeguarding: Strengthening Our Commitment

Safeguarding to ensure children and vulnerable adults are never abused remains a key priority for Canberra-Goulburn and the Society across Australia.

Council endorsed an unabridged Safeguarding Training pathway for low-risk MVEs who do not have direct contact with children, young people, or vulnerable adults, while confirming that for most of us, the standard safeguarding training, face-to-face or on MS Teams, remains mandatory.

Regional and Conference Presidents will receive monthly reports identifying members who have not completed Canberra-Goulburn's mandatory training so that Conference Support can provide follow-up support.

Important: ALL MVEs need to complete Canberra-Goulburn's safeguarding training by 31 December 2026. Members who do not do so will be unable to participate in Society activities such as companion visitations.

Supporting Volunteers When Communities Need Us

Council agreed to a simpler process for one-off volunteering.

The new approach will use a Volunteer Lite Application Form that incorporates acknowledgement of the Code of Conduct, centralised documentation, and appropriate privacy safeguards.

One-off volunteers always need to be paired with Members when delivering services.

The streamlined process is particularly important to enable the Society to respond quickly during emergencies, disasters, and periods of increased community need.

Guidance and documentation will be made available on Member Connect by the end of October 2026.

Growing and Supporting Our Membership

Implementation of the Membership Strategy has commenced. Regional Presidents will be consulted during October, and Conference Support will attend Regional Meetings to explain the strategy and provide supporting resources.

A dedicated Membership Strategy session will also be held at the November Territory Council meeting, with Conference Presidents invited to participate.

The objective is to strengthen recruitment, retention, engagement, and the overall member experience across the Society.

Living the Vincentian Way

Council reaffirmed the importance of ensuring that the Vincentian Way Framework is reflected not only in the Society's services, but also in its leadership, culture and Member experience.

The Society's National Council initiated the Framework, and it is a foundational document to assist with the formation of members of National, State and Territory Councils and senior staff. The Vincentian Way will be incorporated into induction processes for:

- Territory Council members
- Board directors
- Senior staff

This will help ensure a shared understanding of the Society's mission, values and Vincentian identity.

NSW regions - Responding to the high priority of providing more support to our companions in the West and Far South Coast

The Young Drop-In Service is supporting up to ten Companions each day, including access to shower facilities. Meanwhile, the Vinnies Van outreach service will commence in Eden in September, supporting communities without an established Conference or Vinnies Hub.

Housing

Housing insecurity, homelessness and cost-of-living pressures continue to place significant demands on Conferences and Special Works in the ACT and NSW regions.

The Council noted:

- a new three-year emergency accommodation contract to 2029
- a four-year extension agreement of the Community Inclusion Program at Oakes Estate, and
- two tenders submitted for Youth and Family Service programs (If successful, these tenders will support services for children, young people and families, including initiatives focused on physical wellbeing and mental health)

Council also highlighted the importance of ensuring future Vinnies housing reporting focuses on issues affecting the regional areas.

Strengthening Social Justice and Advocacy

The Society will continue to strengthen relationships with elected representatives and other stakeholders.

Council discussed the importance of sharing appropriate, de-identified case studies that show Companions' experiences and the impact of Canberra-Goulburn's Special Works.

These stories can help inform government engagement, advocacy and future funding decisions while respecting privacy and confidentiality. **Financial Sustainability**

The amended FY2026–27 Budget forecasts an operating deficit of approximately \$440,000 and a reduction in cash reserves of approximately \$189,000.

The principal pressures identified were:

- increased Workers' Compensation premiums of approximately \$496,000; and
- additional SCHADS Award costs of approximately \$26,000.

Executive will continue to strengthen expenditure controls and examine organisational efficiencies, aiming to return the cash budget to at least break even during FY2026–27.

Looking Ahead

The coming months will focus on implementing the Membership Strategy, improving volunteer pathways, progressing governance work and maintaining financial sustainability while continuing to respond to increasing needs of companions, particularly in our NSW regions.

The next significant milestones include the October/November engagement on the membership strategy, ensuring all MVE complete the Canberra-Goulburn safeguarding training, implementing the streamlined one-off volunteer process in October, and the November Territory Council meeting, which will include a dedicated Membership Strategy session.