

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release



Vendor Week is a reminder we're at risk of losing a quiet success story in almost every Australian city

Today (16 February), *The Big Issue* celebrates the people working to lift themselves out of poverty and homelessness. Our vendors. **More than 570 vendors** are operating small businesses on streets across the country, earning an income with dignity – from Perth to Newcastle, Darwin to Melbourne.

Vendor Week (16–20 February) is an invitation to pause and notice what has been quietly working for decades – and what we risk losing if we take it for granted. It's a moment to recognise vendors not as charity cases, but as workers, business owners and people earning a living with pride in cities across Australia.

This year, the timing matters. Cost-of-living pressures are intensifying, and [ABS data](#) confirms what frontline organisations already know: people on the margins are hit first and hardest.

At the same time, hybrid work and reduced CBD foot traffic are reshaping Australian cities, with direct consequences for street-based livelihoods, particularly in Melbourne, where pedestrian traffic remains [20 per cent below pre-COVID levels](#).

For organisations like **The Big Issue Australia**, Vendor Week is a critical visibility moment for a workforce dependent on passing trade.

And the model works. Since 1996, The Big Issue has [generated](#) an estimated **\$240 million in social value**, delivering a return of **\$5.50 for every dollar invested**.

The Big Issue CEO **Steven Persson** says Vendor Week highlights a quiet yet deeply impactful success story.

“Vendor Week is a date unfamiliar to most, but essential for a workforce dependent on visibility and passing trade. With cost-of-living pressures and declining foot traffic, street vendors are hit first and hardest. Moments like this shine a light on the incredible work vendors do to change their lives.”

Vendors come to The Big Issue from a wide range of circumstances, including homelessness, long-term unemployment, disability and family breakdown.

Now in its **30th year**, The Big Issue has sold more than **14 million magazines**, supporting more than **8,000 vendors** to earn a collective **\$41.9 million**.

A **special Vendor Week edition** of *The Big Issue* magazine is available for **\$9**, available until **26 February 2025**.

Special magazine content includes vendor-penned *Letter to Our Younger Selves* pieces from **Simon (Adelaide)**, **Sharyn (Brisbane)** and **Louis (Melbourne)**. As part of International

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Vendor Week, the edition also features postcards from international street magazine vendors, with penpals from Switzerland, England, Taiwan, Greece and more.

“After nearly 30 years on the streets, vendors are part of the urban fabric, the familiar face in a hi-vis vest, the greeting offered with a magazine. Familiar, yet increasingly invisible,” Mr Persson said.

“The Big Issue has always been people-powered: sustained by vendors, customers, partners, volunteers and government working together. But this model only works if the public continues to engage.

“Vendor Week is a reminder that this quiet success story still works, but only if we keep seeing it.”

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Media enquiries

The Big Issue CEO Steven Persson and vendors are available for interview. Please contact:

Jen Vuk

Communications and Editorial Manager
jen.vuk@bigissue.org.au | 0408 666 317

Maree Agapitos

Media and Communications Lead
magapitos@bigissue.org.au | 0418 124 190

About The Big Issue Australia

Alongside *The Big Issue* magazine, The Big Issue Australia delivers a range of programs and social enterprises, including the **Women’s Workforce**, **Community Street Soccer Program**, **The Big Issue Classroom**, and **Homes for Homes**. More information: thebigissue.org.au