



SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION



A practical resource to speaking up and taking action locally

- Affordable Housing and Homelessness
- Energy Affordability and Cost of Living Pressures
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers



AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

You can speak up and take action on

Affordable housing and homelessness

1. Talking or writing to your state and federal member of parliament (MP)

You can advocate to your MP for a formal affordable housing plan, better targeted tax concessions, the transfer of public housing properties to community housing providers, and the adoption of local council affordable housing targets – as outlined in this Statement.

2. Gathering the stories of people and families experiencing housing stress

These stories paint a powerful picture and strongly support the Society's advocacy initiatives, including submissions to government. You are encouraged to collect and pass these stories on to your Social Justice Conference and Regional Representatives.

3. Raising awareness in the community by hosting local community events

You can work together with your Conference and Social Justice Representatives to run social justice initiatives, such as 'Social Justice in the Pub', which offer an ideal opportunity to actively engage your local community on these issues and recommended solutions.

4. Establishing strong relationships with the Society's and community homeless services

This may help you to better understand how to respond most effectively to people struggling with housing costs and homelessness.

5. Keeping up to date on the topic of affordable housing

You can review the information that is distributed through the Society's Social Justice network and delivered in partnership with organisations such as Shelter and Australians for Affordable Housing.

When you take an action share this with other people

Tell them why your action was important and what you did. Put an item in your Society, church or community newsletter. Share your story on our new Social Justice Facebook Group by e-mailing your story and photos to social.justice@vinnies.org.au

Your stories will inform and encourage others to take action too!

ENERGY AFFORDABILITY AND COST OF LIVING PRESSURES

You can speak up and take action on Energy Affordability

1. Talking or writing to your State Member of Parliament (MP)

You can advocate to your MP for a more effective customer protection framework and a fairer percentage-based energy concessions system in NSW – as outlined in this Statement.

2. Gathering the stories of people and families experiencing energy stress

The stories you relay to us paint a powerful picture and strongly support the Society's advocacy initiatives, including submissions to government. You are encouraged to collect and pass these stories on to your Social Justice Representative in your Conference and Regional Council.

3. Actively monitoring whether the customer protection framework is protecting vulnerable and low-income households

As a Society member who provides direct assistance to people in energy stress, you can play a fundamental role in making sure the customer protection framework is delivering desired outcomes by reporting failures to the AER and EWON.

You can also play a valuable role by passing on information to your Social Justice Representative for Society advocacy action.

4. Assisting people to improve their energy efficiency and save on their energy bills

You can help people you assist to save on their energy bills by providing useful tips on practical measures they can take in their homes to reduce their energy consumption and by referring them to programs such as the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS). The more you know about energy efficiency, the more you can educate others.

5. Taking part in energy customer consultation forums and community workshops

You can take part in customer consultation forums and community workshops run by the government and regulatory bodies such as EWON, which provide an opportunity to raise important issues arising from your local Conference work.

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REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

You can speak up and take action on Refugees and Asylum Seekers

1. Talking or writing to your Member of Parliament (MP)

You can advocate to your MP for children to be released from detention, for asylum seekers to be granted work rights, for faster determination processes, and for mandatory detention to only be used as a means of last resort - as outlined in the Society's National Policy.

2. Holding an awareness raising night - creating opportunities for asylum seekers to speak up and be agents for change

You can work together with your Conference and Social Justice Representatives to run local events and public forums, such as 'Social Justice in the Pub' events. These offer an ideal opportunity for people seeking asylum to share their stories with the community, address misconceptions and be agents for change.

3. Showing a movie or TV show about refugees and asylum seekers

You can gather a group and hold a movie night. There are a lot of possibilities including the SBS series *Go Back to Where You Came From* and the documentaries *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* and *When Mary meets Mohammed*. Other ideas can be obtained from the Refugee Council of Australia Refugee Week resource refugeeweek.org.au/resources/kit.php

4. Exploring volunteer work opportunities for asylum seekers

You can make contact with asylum seekers in your area and pro-actively look for volunteering opportunities, particularly those without work rights.

5. Telling everyone

You can challenge public misconceptions by speaking out vocally and often with friends, colleagues and family. Seeking asylum is not illegal. Let it be known. If you are unsure of all the facts, the Refugee Council has produced a comprehensive resource: refugeecouncil.org.au/r/rpt/2013-NSWGovt.pdf

These resources and facts are also available on the Society's Vintranet and Social Justice Facebook page.

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Where can I get more information?

To find out about the Society's services and to access our information resources, visit vinnies.org.au

To meet and connect up with like-minded Vincentians in your area, who are passionate about speaking up for justice, contact your Central Council's Social Justice Representative (CC SJ Rep). Your Regional or Central Council Office will provide you with the details of your CC SJ Rep.

To access the latest social justice news and activities sign up to the Society's new Social Justice Facebook Group. All you need is a Facebook account and to email your request to join to the Facebook Group Administrator on sj.facebook@vinnies.org.au.

To pursue opportunities to engage any media, please first contact the Society's Communications and Media Manager, Yolanda Saiz, on Yolanda.saiz@vinnies.org.au or 0417 446 430.

To get copies of the Society's Advocacy Resources and for all other Social Justice queries please contact the Society's Social Justice Coordinator, Lukas Rajnoch, on lukas.rajnoch@vinnies.org.au or 9568 0279.

Whatever steps you decide to take in support of a fairer and more just society, we wish you well and look forward to hearing from you!

In Ozanam

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Social Justice Committee







St Vincent de Paul Society
good works