

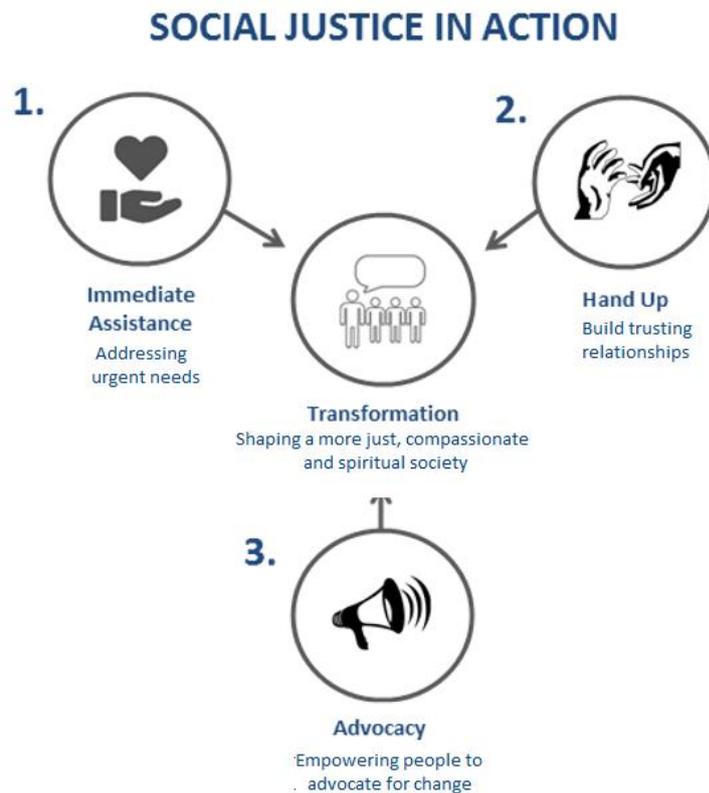
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW: Social Justice Representatives

Overview

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is inspired by its work with people in need to seek justice for them in our communities. We provide immediate support and build trusting relationships with the people we serve. This trust helps us to uncover the causes of disadvantage and offer a *hand up* to people in need.

Inspired by our Christian faith and by the legacy of the St Vincent de Paul Society's founder, Frederic Ozanam, we also speak out against social injustice. A leading thinker and social activist, Frederic sought personal and social renewal and fought for many social rights, such as the right for a natural wage covering all necessities of life, and for a just distribution of wealth amongst citizens.

Today, we continue to raise our voice, with the people we assist, to challenge the circumstances that stop people from enjoying the full life they, with us, should enjoy. We advocate for change because we want to eliminate the causes of poverty. The diagram below illustrates how we believe we can transform our world:



Social Justice Representatives in NSW are leaders in the St Vincent de Paul Society: they develop and implement our social justice advocacy. They help ensure that the experiences and observations of members at every level of the Society are brought to the attention of the State Council, via the Social Justice Committee. They inform our priorities, shape our responses, and support the Society to take action.

With Social Justice Representatives at the Conference, Regional and Central Council levels working together, we can build empowered communities who speak up and advocate for change. The energising role of Social Justice Representatives is described in more detail below.

All Social Justice Representatives

Each Social Justice Representative is central to what we do in the Society of St Vincent de Paul. Our Rule¹ tells us:

1. The Society is concerned not only with alleviating need but also with identifying the unjust structures that cause it. (Part I Article 7.1)
2. Vincentians envisage a more just society in which the rights, responsibilities and development of all people are promoted. (Part I Article 7.2)

The role of Social Justice Representatives at the Conference, Regional and Central Council levels is set out in more detail in the Society's Member and Volunteer Charter.

Conference Social Justice Representatives

The Conference Social Justice Representative is the main champion for social justice advocacy within the Conference. Conference Social Justice Representatives will:

- Support and/or guide local advocacy activities such as forums, events, table talks and petitions.
- Enjoy state-wide social justice forums and local social justice events.
- Build on lively relationships with other Vinnies advocates, parishes, organisations and local social justice groups, such as by attending or convening local social justice networks.
- Keep informed by signing up to our Social Justice Advocacy Network and help disseminate information to conference members.
- Encourage members to take an interest in social justice advocacy activities and understand the relevance of social justice and systemic advocacy in conference work.
- Share information, stories and case studies with SVDP State Support Office (SSO) team.

Regional Council Social Justice Representatives

The Regional Council Social Justice Representative is the main champion for social justice advocacy on the Regional Council. The Social Justice Representative is a Vice President on Regional Council, is a full member of the Council and leads the Regional Council social justice team comprising the Conference Council Social Justice Representatives. They are supported in their role by relevant staff members.

The Regional Council Social Justice Representative is responsible for the following, however it is possible to delegate and share key tasks with Conference Social Justice Representatives:

- Support and/or guide local advocacy activities such as forums, events, table talks and petitions.
- Enjoy state-wide social justice forums and local social justice events.
- Build on lively relationships with other Vinnies advocates, parishes, organisations and local social justice groups, such as by attending or convening local social justice networks.
- Keep informed by signing up to our Social Justice Advocacy Network and help disseminate information to conferences in your area.

¹ The Rule, 2014 Edition https://www.vinnies.org.au/icms_docs/168122_The_Rule.pdf

- Recruit social justice representatives into conference positions.
- Identify and report on current and emerging social justice issues, including by speaking to conference Social Justice Representatives and other members of the Social Justice Network to build a picture of issues in your area.
- Attend Regional Council meetings and provide social justice advocacy updates.

Central Council Social Justice Representatives

The Central Council Social Justice Representative is the main champion for social justice on the Council. The Social Justice Representative is a Vice President on Central Council is a full member of the Council, and leads the Central Council social justice team comprising the Regional Council Social Justice Representatives. They are supported in their role by relevant staff members.

The Central Council Social Justice Representative will be engaged in activities, relationships, information sharing and meetings and may delegate and share key tasks with her or his Regional and Conference Social Justice Representatives.

Events and Activities

- Support and/or guide local advocacy activities such as forums, events, table talks and petitions.
- Enjoy state-wide social justice forums and local social justice events.

Relationships

- Have a positive relationship with the Central Council, in particular with the President and relevant staff so that they and their activities are enlivened with social justice.
- Recruit social justice representatives across the organisations including regions and conferences.
- Build on lively relationships with other Vinnies advocates and Social Justice Representatives, parishes and other local social justice groups, such as by attending or convening local social justice networks.

Information

- Share information between Regional and Conference Social Justice Representatives in your area.
- Report to State Social Justice Committee Meetings.
- Share information, stories and case studies with SVDP State Support Office (SSO) team.

Meetings

- You or your nominee will aim to attend Social Justice Committee meetings (2 to 4 face to face meetings a year in Sydney, and occasional teleconferences). If you are unable to attend, you may nominate a delegate with the approval of your President or the Chair of the Social Justice Committee.
- You will aim to attend Central Council meetings (about 6 face to face meetings a year).