



**Vinnies**  
good works

**SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
**NETWORK**

Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for August 2020

**Save the date for our annual Rosalie Rendu Forum**

Over recent months, the strength and resilience of our communities has been tested. First floods, then drought and fires, and now a global pandemic. Each of these has exposed the flaws in the social and economic systems that should protect the most vulnerable among us.

Out of crisis however, comes opportunity. Together, we can achieve an Australia that doesn't merely return to normal but embodies the compassion and justice we strive to live out every day.

This year, at our 2020 Rosalie Rendu Forum, we will come together online to hear expert views on the social, economic and environmental consequences of COVID-19 and consider how we can re-imagine a more equitable Australia.

More information will be available over the weeks to come. In the meantime, please add the Rosalie Rendu Forum from 6pm on Thursday 15 October to your calendar.



## New Catholic Bishops Social Justice Statement

During COVID-19, the newly released Australian Catholic Bishops Social Justice statement is a timely reminder for us to better support one another and breakdown the stigma associated with mental ill-health.

*To Live Life to the Full: Mental health in Australia today* aligns with the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Social Justice Statement on Mental Health, demonstrating how social determinants strongly correlate with a person's mental health. Poverty, homelessness, a lack of stable income and barriers to health care can all contribute to a deterioration in mental health.

The Statement reflects on the history of mental health care in Australia and the move away from institutionalised mental health responses. It also observes that inadequate funding for community-based mental health services continues to leave people isolated and without the support they need.

The Bishops Statement invites us all to reject mental health stigmatisation, to work for the transformation of social determinants of mental ill-health, and to call for policies and services that meet the needs of those most marginalised in our communities.

As a Society, we can encourage our conferences and broader communities to be welcoming, accepting and supportive of those experiencing mental health concerns.

To read the Statement and learn more, please click [here](#).



## Raise the Rate for Good

Last month, we were disappointed that the Australian Government declined to make a long-term commitment to ensuring JobSeeker (formerly Newstart) remains at a rate that enables people to cover the basics.

Instead, from September the Coronavirus Supplement will drop from \$550/fortnight to \$250/fortnight. This means that people on JobSeeker will receive around \$57 a day. This is less than the age pension (without supplements) and brings the payment back below the poverty line - currently estimated at \$457/week.

At this stage, there is no commitment to extend the Supplement beyond the end of this year.

As the Government considers the future of the JobSeeker payment, it is critical that they understand the importance of a fair and adequate payment. The upcoming Day of Action on Wednesday August 26 is the perfect opportunity to set aside some time to call or write to your MP. As always, if you'd like any assistance, including help with content or contact details, email [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au).

You can also hone your advocacy skills by joining ACOSS's Raise the Rate Winter School – an opportunity for campaign supporters to build their confidence, knowledge, and skills in [dealing with the media](#), [lobbying](#) and [building local alliances](#), run over three sessions in late August and early September.



**RAISE**  
**THE RATE**  
**FOR GOOD**

## Vinnies Speaks Out During Homelessness Week

During Homelessness Week recently, Vinnies called for the NSW Government to lead the way in building social housing for a post-COVID recovery.

From the [Hawkesbury](#) to the [Hunter](#), Social Justice Representatives from the Society spoke to their local media about the need for Government to invest in more social housing to ensure people experiencing homelessness have a place to call home and to prevent further homelessness too.

Before coronavirus reached NSW, more than 100,000 people were already on the waiting list for social housing – with some waiting for more than 10 years. Now that COVID-19 has impacted the personal finances and wellbeing of millions of households, a significant increase in social housing is more urgent than ever.

To support the call for more social housing in NSW, sign Vinnies' Build Homes, Build Hope petition at [www.vinnies.org.au/socialhousing](http://www.vinnies.org.au/socialhousing)



## Vinnies launches new Social Justice Network

Social Justice Representatives from across the Sydney Archdiocese recently came together for the inaugural meeting of our newest Social Justice Network.

The Sydney Arch Social Justice Network will meet every month to identify and respond to local social injustices and support Vinnies state and nationwide campaigns. It is our third social justice network across the metropolitan area, complementing the existing networks in Parramatta and Broken Bay.

Participation in any of our social justice networks is a great way to get involved in shaping a more just and compassionate society. For more information on the Social Justice Network for Sydney Arch, Parramatta or Broken Bay please contact [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au).



## No Child Left Behind Campaign

Currently there are approximately 16,000 children and young people seeking asylum in Australia who have been directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, many of whom have no access to a financial safety net or Medicare.

In response, the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has partnered with Jesuit Refugee Service Australia as part of the No Child Left Behind Campaign. From the 6-12 September 2020, we are inviting schools across New South Wales to raise awareness and take action in a National Week of Solidarity.

For more information or to register please contact [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au) or [click here to access the Resource Kit](#).



## NSW Housing Strategy

The NSW Government recently sought feedback on a Discussion Paper to inform the development of a new Housing Strategy for NSW. The Strategy will set a 20-year vision for housing in NSW, and outline the key priorities and actions the NSW Government will take to achieve this vision.

Vinnies NSW prepared a submission focused on the need for more social housing, affordable housing, and more funding for homelessness services. We also drew attention to the need for improved standards of accommodation for boarding house residents and tenants of caravan parks. So too, we asked that the Housing Strategy include targets and annual public reports of progress, and that stakeholders have the opportunity to comment on the draft Strategy as well.

For more information about the Strategy [click here](#). To read the Vinnies submission [click here](#).



## Upcoming dates and events

Changemakers Organising School

Starting 13 August

[Click for information](#)

Energy and sustainability: Future Homes

2pm-3pm Thursday 20 August

[Register here](#)

International Day of Enforced Disappearance

Sunday 30 August

[Click for information](#)

Social housing pathways

1pm-2pm Wednesday 19 August

[Register here](#)

Social Justice Sunday

Sunday 30 August

[Click for information](#)

**Rosalie Rendu Forum**

**6pm Thursday 15 October**

**Save the date!**

**Do you know of a local social justice event or news**

**item that you'd like everyone to know about?**

**CONTACT US**