



Vinnies
good works

SOCIAL JUSTICE
NETWORK

Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for January 2021

Watch our social housing petition debated in NSW Parliament this week!

Over the last 18 months, members and supporters of the Society have collected more than 15,000 signatures on our petition urging the NSW Government to invest in social housing.

From Woolloomooloo to Wilcannia and Armidale to Albury, we received hundreds upon hundreds of signatures each week from local parishes, conferences, retail stores and homelessness services across NSW.

Now, from 3.30pm this coming Thursday, members, volunteers and staff across the Society will come together to watch NSW MPs debate our petition in the Legislative Assembly.

There are a limited number of places available to join us in the Jubilee room of [NSW Parliament](#), at our offices in [Lewisham](#), [Wentworthville](#) and [Newcastle](#), and other locations across NSW to watch the debate take place online.

If you have participated in the campaign and you would like to join us please click on one of the links above to register to attend or email us at social.justice@vinnies.org.au to find out whether there is a get-together near you.

If you can't get to one of our gatherings, **you can also watch the debate from your phone, tablet or computer by heading to www.parliament.nsw.gov.au** at 4pm on Thursday and clicking on Webcasts on the right hand side.

We know that the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Melinda Pavey, will use this opportunity to advise the Parliament of the Government's current investments in social housing. We are aware of and thankful for these investments. But we also know there are still more than 50,000 applicants for social housing across NSW and that the newly updated waiting list for social housing has *increased*. With this in mind, we hope the Minister will take the opportunity to listen to the voices of more than 15,000 people and commit to investing in significantly more social housing over the decade ahead.

For more information contact social.justice@vinnies.org.au



Australian Government to cut JobSeeker

The St Vincent de Paul Society is deeply concerned about people currently on JobSeeker who are still locked out of employment. **They face the prospect of returning to live on \$40 a day just six weeks from now, at the end of March.**

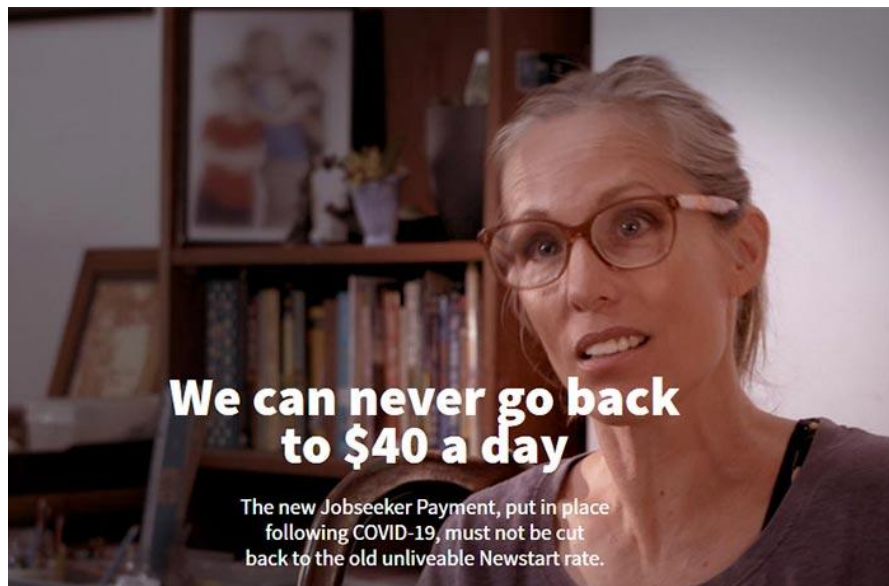
In recent years approximately one third of people assisted by the Society in NSW have been JobSeeker recipients: Every day our members saw how the old rate of pay forced people to choose between essentials such as putting food on the table, paying bills, or accessing vital healthcare.

The introduction of the coronavirus supplement lifted thousands of people out of poverty, with many no longer having to rely on charities just to make ends meet. Yet with each successive cut to the supplement we have seen a corresponding increase in requests for assistance. If the supplement is completely removed at the end of March there will be a much greater spike

in the number of people that need help. [New analysis by the Guardian](#) shows that the poorest areas will be hardest hit.

As the Federal Government considers the future of JobSeeker it is critical that they hear directly from their constituents about the importance of payments that act as a true safety net, allowing everyone to afford the basics, including housing.

To find out more email social.justice@vinnies.org.au or use the [ACOSS guide to contacting your Federal MP](#).



Refugees and People Seeking Asylum

This coming Wednesday, representatives of the more than 160 organisational supporters of the [Time For A Home campaign](#) will hand over a petition urging the Australian Government to release people seeking asylum from detention and commit to their resettlement in a safe, permanent home by World Refugee Day (20 June).

In recent months there has been some [welcome news as dozens of refugees have been released from detention into the community](#). Yet hundreds of people continue to be held in immigration detention - in community facilities, in prison-like conditions, and offshore in PNG and Nauru. After seven long years it is time to stop playing politics with peoples' lives, and deliver on our international obligations to give people seeking asylum a fair pathway to a permanent home. [Add your name to the petition here](#).

Vinnies contribution to NSW audit of homelessness

Recently, the Society made a submission to the the NSW Audit Office audit into the effectiveness of the NSW Homelessness Strategy and the NSW Government's response to homelessness during COVID-19.

While acknowledging that there is much that the NSW Government is doing to reduce and respond to homelessness, we submitted that the Homelessness Strategy would be more effective if the NSW Government invested in significantly more social housing as well as wrap around support to assist tenants who were previously homeless or at risk of homelessness to maintain their tenancies.

The Society also shared that the delivery of the Strategy would be enhanced by the allocation of additional resources to the Specialist Homelessness Services program so that providers are better equipped to reduce and respond to homelessness across NSW. An increased focus on reducing exits from Government institutions into homelessness was also recommended.

To further the NSW Government's successful efforts to respond to COVID-19, the Society advised we would also like to see additional resources allocated to the Together Home initiative and continued work to ensure former rough sleepers who are accommodated in hotels and motels are able to transition to more permanent housing.

We look forward to reading the outcome of this important audit and hope that our contribution will support the NSW Government to reduce and prevent homelessness across NSW over the years to come. **To read our submission head to the [Vinnies NSW website](#).**



Last chance to provide feedback on the NSW property tax proposal

In the November 2020 Budget, the NSW Treasurer, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, announced that the NSW Government is proposing to give home buyers the choice to pay either stamp duty or an annual property tax.

To inform our response to this proposal, the Society would like to hear from members and supporters about whether and how the option of paying a property tax would assist people experiencing poverty and disadvantage across NSW. **To read more about the proposal head to the [NSW Treasury website](#) and then email us at social.justice@vinnies.org.au to share your views.**



Upcoming dates and events

Social housing debate in NSW Parliament

4pm Thursday 18 February

[Watch live](#)

International Women's Day

Monday 8 March 2021

[More information](#)

World Day of Social Justice

20 February 2021

[More information](#)

Harmony Week

15-21 March 2021

[More information](#)

Do you know of a local social justice event or news

item that you'd like everyone to know about?

[CONTACT US](#)