



Vinnies
good works

SOCIAL JUSTICE
NETWORK

Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for May 2021

National Reconciliation Week

The theme for this year's National Reconciliation Week *More than a word: Reconciliation Takes Action* encourages everyone to reflect on their own contributions to the reconciliation movement, and strive to do more.

In the words of Reconciliation Australia:

“... we must be more determined than ever if we are to achieve the goals of the movement — a just, equitable, reconciled Australia.

As history tells us, this will only happen through continued and concerted action from those who are already part of the reconciliation movement to those who are yet to join.”

If you'd like to raise awareness of reconciliation in your community, resources are available on [Reconciliation Australia's website](#). Ideas for conferences member, including notes for parish bulletins or talks, are also available on the [members' website](#).

As the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW nears the end of its current Reconciliation Action Plan, and embarks on a new one, Vincentians are also invited to [join us for a discussion about how we can strengthen our contribution](#) towards a future based on compassion, justice, hope, faith and reconciliation. Facilitated by our Aboriginal Engagement Partner, Rob Cohen, this webinar will be an opportunity to hear about actions members have already taken in support of reconciliation and discuss what else we might do into the future. [Click here to register here to join us for this webinar on June 1 at 12pm.](#)

Society responds to the Federal Budget

Last week, the Australian Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, delivered the [Federal Budget](#). The Society welcomed the focus on reducing unemployment and the investment in aged care, disability services, mental health and child care too. These commitments will ensure our health and welfare systems are better placed to look after some vulnerable Australians over the years ahead. We were also pleased that the Federal Government reversed its earlier

decision not to pay the Equal Remuneration Order. This decision means that homelessness services won't have to shut their doors or reduce the amount of support available for people who are homeless.

But we were disappointed that the Australian Government left many people experiencing poverty and disadvantage behind by once again not seeing fit to increase the JobSeeker payment or invest in more social and affordable housing. Economists, business leaders, and welfare agencies alike have long-agreed that taking these steps would both grow the economy and reduce inequality across Australia.

The day after the Budget, the leader of the Federal Opposition, Anthony Albanese, announced that a future Labor Government would invest in a [\\$10 billion in a housing future fund](#). The [Society welcomes this initiative](#). Having partnered with the NSW Coalition Government to deliver more than 500 social and affordable housing homes through the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, we know first-hand that housing funds can and do successfully deliver new housing for people experiencing disadvantage.

The Society urges the Federal Government to adopt a similar plan to house the tens of thousands of households currently waiting for social housing and provide affordable housing for the many moderate income earners struggling to pay the rent each week.

We also continue our call for the NSW Government to invest in significantly more social housing in the upcoming NSW Budget on 22 June.

150 Days of Action for People Seeking Refuge

On May 1, the Feast of St Joseph the Worker, representatives from parishes, schools, religious orders and refugee support organisations gathered at the launch of 150 Days of Actions for People Seeking Refuge. Between now and the World Day of Migrants and Refugees on Sunday 27 September, this campaign will seek to reignite support for refugees across the Catholic community. Although people seeking protection in Australia are no longer making daily headlines, there are still thousands of people in our community – and over 200 still in Papua New Guinea and Nauru – living in limbo. Many have no access to support and are locked out of employment.

A fair system for those seeking asylum would process people's claims efficiently. It would also ensure appropriate access to support and advice for people living in our community waiting for a pathway to permanent protection. As demonstrated by the Federal Government's recent decision to finalise over 1000 applications for asylum by the end of June, our system continues to fail to give people a fair go.

If you'd like to play a part raising awareness and building support in your conferences, parishes or wider communities, please contact social.justice@vinnies.org.au, and we can provide you with resources ahead of World Refugee Day on June 20.

You can also sign up to attend our [Refugee Week Social Justice Webinar](#), on June 23 at 12pm.

Time to register for the CEO Sleepout!

Each [Vinnies CEO Sleepout](#) participant commits to raise thousands of dollars to help Vinnies provide essential services to the people who need them.

Last year, the Vinnies CEO Sleepout raised \$5.7 million for people experiencing homelessness and people at risk of homelessness. This year we can make an even bigger impact.

To support this important event, please [register for the Vinnies CEO Sleepout](#) or [make a donation today](#).



Vinnies' verdict on the NSW Housing Strategy

Last year, the Minister for Housing, Melinda Pavey, announced that the NSW Government would develop its first ever Housing Strategy for NSW. The Society welcomed this initiative and [made a submission with recommendations](#) to improve housing outcomes for people experiencing disadvantage across NSW.

Earlier this month, the new [Housing Strategy](#) was released and received a mixed reception at best.

The Society welcomed the inclusion of affordability as one of the four pillars that the Strategy seeks to deliver and the announcement that the NSW Government will introduce a new housing evidence centre to simplify access to key housing data, especially given the lack of transparency to date. Our community housing provider, Amelie Housing, is also interested to learn more about the new register of NSW Government land, in the hope that this helps identify opportunities to develop new housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Unfortunately, the Strategy fails to deliver in a critical area: it does not include any targets for the delivery of new social and affordable housing. Without targets, we are understandably concerned that there is nothing to require the NSW Government to budget the resources necessary to meet the overwhelming need for social and affordable housing over the next 20 years.

Similarly, the Strategy neglects to include targets to reduce homelessness across NSW. Consistent with the existing Premier's Priority to halve street sleeping—an initiative that the Society strongly supports—we would have liked to see the Strategy strive to reduce other types of homelessness.

The Society is disappointed that the NSW Government missed this opportunity to focus on providing much more housing for people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness. We will be writing to the Minister for Housing to share our concerns and ask questions about the delivery of the Strategy over the years ahead.



Upcoming dates and events

Laudato Si' Week

16-24 May

[More information](#)

Modern Slavery Webinar

Sydney Archdiocese Anti-Slavery Taskforce

4pm Thursday 27 May

[More information](#)

Reconciliation Action Plan Webinar

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

12pm-1:15pm Tuesday 1 June

[Register](#)

Local Organising Masterclass

Sydney Alliance

Various dates in May, June and July

[Register](#)

End Child Detention Webinar

End Child Detention Coalition

6pm Tuesday 25 May

[Email for more information](#)

Parliamentary Inquiries Workshop

Reconciliation Australia

27 May - 3 June

[More information](#)

Refugee Week Webinar

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

12pm-1pm Wednesday 23 June

[Register](#)

Rosalie Rendu Forum

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

6pm Thursday 21 October

Save the date!

Do you know of a local social justice event or news item that you'd like everyone to know about?

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