



Vinnies
good works

SOCIAL JUSTICE
NETWORK

Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for August 2021

Struggling financially during lockdown?

For many people in our communities, complying with public health orders has meant lost income or lost work. For others, a loss of income or work has come about due to the economic impact of the pandemic. And for still others, caring responsibilities, illness, trauma, personal circumstances or a lack of suitable jobs means they have been without work for even longer.

While the NSW and Federal Governments are providing financial support to people impacted by the pandemic, we are concerned about those who are still missing out, especially people on income support who were unemployed prior to the recent outbreaks.

While people who've been locked out of employment for months or even years now face even greater hurdles to finding work, in many cases their living costs have increased. As people stay home their energy bills are rising. For people unable or unwilling to go shopping, the cost of ordering online can be prohibitive. And many informal supports, so often relied on to cover the basics, are no longer accessible.

If you are amongst those struggling to make ends meet and are willing to share your story, [ACOSS would be grateful to hear from you](#) so that they can keep these issues on the political agenda. You can also email us directly at social.justice@vinnies.org.au.

If you need help covering the basics, you can also call Vinnies Assist on 13 18 12. For those who may be eligible, here's a quick rundown of key financial supports:

- [COVID-19 Disaster Payments](#) are available to people who have lost work (including people on income support) due to a state public health order.
- The [Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment](#) is available to people who can't earn an income because they are required to self-isolate, quarantine, or care for someone with COVID-19.

- The \$320 [Test and Isolate Support Payment](#) is available to people in local government areas of concern who are unable to work while waiting for a coronavirus test result.
- Renters who have been financially impacted can [request a rent reduction](#) from their landlord. The NSW Government is providing financial incentives of up to \$1500 to landlords who provide rent relief to tenants.
- Households having difficulty paying their energy bills may be eligible for up to \$400 worth of [Energy Accounts Payment Assistance \(EAPA\) vouchers](#).

Use the [Service NSW Assistance Finder](#) to find out more about accessing government assistance, or visit the [AskIzzy](#) website to find other available services.

What's next for our social housing advocacy?

Thank you to members and supporters who took our survey to inform whether the Society should continue to advocate for more social housing through our Build Homes, Build Hope campaign.

More than 80 percent of respondents (82.9%) agree that we should continue our campaign. More than 80 per cent (81.9%) believe that we should focus our attention on both the NSW Government and Federal Government. More than 75 percent (77.9%) agree that, where we focus on the NSW Government, we should seek to influence both the NSW Budget in June 2022 and the NSW election in March 2023.

Informed by these results and their experience of our campaign to date, our Social Justice Committee—made up of a Social Justice Representative for each Central Council and a youth Social Justice Representative too—recently met to consider the future of our campaign. The Committee unanimously agreed to continue Build Homes, Build Hope.

Our next step will be to convene a planning meeting to determine the actions we will take over the 18 months ahead. We'll invite members and supporters who have been integrally involved in the campaign to join us at this meeting. In the meantime, if you have ideas for actions you think we should take, please share them with Mark at mark.ludbrooke@vinnies.org.au

More social and affordable housing for regional NSW?

Over the last twelve months, house prices and rents have skyrocketed across much of regional NSW and vacancy rates have been at record lows. In response, the Minister for Planning, Rob Stokes, recently announced that the NSW Government would establish a taskforce to deliver more homes in regional NSW. Minister Stokes advised that this new development must include a variety of housing types.

Consistent with our Build Homes, Build Hope campaign and the recommendations in our [Housing and Homelessness Social Justice Statement](#), the Society would like to see any new housing developments in regional communities include an adequate proportion of both [social housing](#) and [affordable housing](#).

We will prepare a submission to this effect. We also encourage members and supporters of the Society who live in regional NSW to make your own personal submission, advising the NSW Government about the need for investment in much more social and affordable housing in your region.

You can lodge a submission [here](#). You can find the social housing waiting list for your area at this [link](#) and information about increasing rents from the Department of Communities and Justice [here](#) or the Tenants Union [here](#).

For assistance with the above, please contact Mark at mark.ludbrooke@vinnies.org.au



Uluru Statement

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to write or coordinate a letter to your Federal MP supporting the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#), as the Government prepares to consider proposals and recommendation on an Indigenous Voice.

If you'd like to add your support for a First Nations Voice to Parliament protected in the constitution – not just legislated – you can still do so [via an online form here](#). You can also contact social.justice@vinnies.org.au if you'd like to amplify this action by inviting others in your community to join you in a show of support. The more MPs hear these messages directly from the people they represent, the more likely they are to take action.

In related news, if you want to know more about how you can help build support for First Nations self-determination and justice, the new Passing the Message Stick guide contains useful advice on words that word. Based on two years of research led by a cohort of First Nations communicators, journalists and advocates, it describes how to talk about important issues in ways that resonate with people who have yet to make up their minds, and break down barriers to inaction. The guide is available here: <https://passingthemessagestick.org/resources>



'Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor' Social Justice Statement

In the lead up to Social Justice Sunday on 29 August 2021, the Australian Catholic Bishops have released their 2021 Social Justice Statement, [Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor](#). The Statement affirms that "we human beings need a change of heart, mind and behaviour", and need to work towards more ecologically sustainable ways of living for our planet and its people. A number of Bishops came together to create this [video](#), demonstrating their commitment to taking action on the seven *Laudato Si* goals and asking people to take steps towards better protecting the planet. On Wednesday 8 September 2021 from 6-7pm, the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney Justice and Peace Office will be hosting an online gathering to delve deeper into the themes of the Statement. To register, please [click here](#).

Stories of Hope and Courage: Seeking Refuge in Australia

As part of the Year of St Joseph and the 150 Days of Action campaign, Social Justice Around the Bay, the St Vincent de Paul Society and Jesuit Refugee Service will be holding an online event on Thursday, 23 September 2021, from 7-8pm. This event, Stories of Hope and Courage - Seeking Refuge in Australia, will highlight stories of courage and resilience from those who have sought protection and are living in our communities. The webinar will also present the most up to date facts and figures, and share concerns about government policies that are having a negative impact on individuals and families seeking safety in Australia. Please register your interest in attending by emailing social.justice@vinnies.org.au



Rosalie Rendu Forum: Save the Date

On Thursday 21 October 2021 at 6pm we will hold our annual Rosalie Rendu Forum. This year the forum will focus on the intersections between gender, poverty and violence. It will examine how poverty and inequity can increase a women's risk of domestic abuse, explore current debates about how best to respond, and discuss how we can come together to reduce the impact of gender-based violence and abuse in Australia.

This year's event will be live-streamed. Should Covid-19 restrictions allow, we hope some conferences may be able to gather together to watch the event together. To receive more information in the lead-up to the event, email social.justice@vinnies.org.au

Events

Better Futures Australia Forum and workshops

12 - 19 August 2021

[More information](#)

Housing after prison for people with complex support needs

UNSW Social Policy Research Centre

24 August 2021

[More information](#)

Catholic Mission One Heart Many Voices Online Conference

1-4 September 2021

[More information](#)

Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor Social Justice Statement Launch and Online Gathering

8 September 2021

[More information](#)

Stories of Hope and Courage - Seeking Refuge in Australia webinar

23 September 2021 from 7-8pm

More information to come

Rosalie Rendu Forum

21 October 2021 at 6pm

More information to come

Is there a local social justice event or news item you'd like everyone to know about?

CONTACT US