



**Vinnies**  
good works

**SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
**NETWORK**

## Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for December

### Seasons Greetings

It has been a big year, and for many it has been a hard one. Some people lost work or income; many spent far too much time in homes that were too crowded, too noisy, or too cold. Some people experienced new levels of stigma and discrimination; and most of us were separated from families and friends.

But while the pandemic presented new and significant challenges for many, for others it meant a glimpse of another way of living. Some people sleeping rough were, for the first time, provided a pathway to secure and stable housing. Some people on income support saw their income temporarily increase. They no longer struggled to pay for basics and could dream of a better future. People on temporary visas were able to access some services and supports they'd previously been denied, and some people seeking asylum were given a first taste of freedom. Many of us experienced an inspirational outpouring of community generosity.

Thank you to everyone who took action over the last year to help secure better conditions for some of the most marginalised people in our communities. But while there have been some small wins along the way, on many of the big ticket items it is clear that relentless advocacy towards our vision of radical inclusion and just and compassionate communities must continue.

What can we learn from the experiences of the past year? How do we keep the good and leave the bad behind?

With both federal and state elections on the horizon, there are very real opportunities to secure significant and lasting shifts in the policies that impact all of us, but especially the most vulnerable. To realise these opportunities, however, it is up to us to make sure the people who seek to represent us understand what we think is important.

National Council will shortly release a series of resources to support advocacy in the lead up to the federal election. And in coming months we'll share opportunities to learn more and offer support to those who'd like to get involved: read below to find out how to tell us where your interests lie.

And of course, we'll keep working to build support for investment in social housing through Build Homes, Build Hope. Again, we'd love to hear your ideas about how best to make this happen.

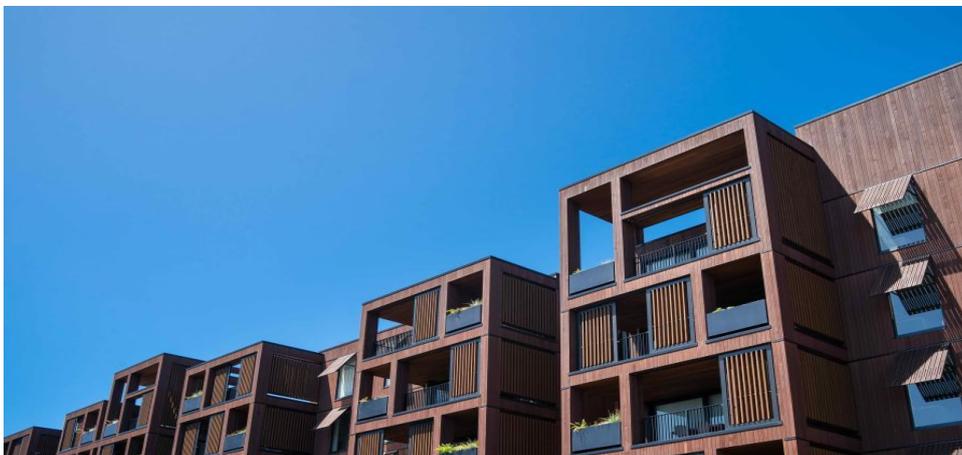
As we head towards March 2023, we'll also start shaping a statement of election priorities important to the Vinnies community. The biannual Social Justice Forum - scheduled for May 2022 - will be a great opportunity for many of you to come together to connect, learn, share ideas, and shape our program for change. In the meantime, we wish you the best for the festive season ahead - may it be a time for all of us to rest, rejuvenate and reconnect.

### ***What's next for Build Homes, Build Hope?***

As Social Justice Network members will know, we have been campaigning for the NSW Government to invest in more social housing since 2019. During this period, the NSW Government made some new investments and fast tracked existing commitments too, but the response has fallen considerably short of what is needed to ensure the more than 100,000 people on the waiting list have a place to call home.

Now, with one eye on the NSW Budget next year and the other on the NSW election in March 2023, the Society is considering what actions members could take to urge the NSW Government to deliver the level of social housing necessary to reduce homelessness and housing stress across our state.

During the last phase of our Build Homes, Build Hope campaign we asked Social Justice Representatives to meet with their MPs and members and supporters to collect signatures on our social housing petition. What actions do you think should we take over the year ahead? What action would you be willing to take? If you'd like to share your ideas, please email [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au) by 5pm Wednesday 15 December, as we prepare the campaign to come!



## Can you take action before the upcoming Federal election?

Elections afford us an opportunity to urge candidates to commit to policies that will support people to overcome and avoid poverty and disadvantage.

With the next Federal election expected to take place sometime between March and May 2022, we will soon have an invaluable opportunity to urge the next Australian Government, whomever it may be, to invest in social and affordable housing and ensure people experiencing unemployment don't have to continue to live below the poverty line.

To help us to plan our response, we are asking members and supporters to answer a few questions to let us know which electorate you live in and what actions you would be willing to take.

If you are keen to make an impact, [please click here](#) -- it will only take 2 minutes to share your feedback. Thank you in advance!



## Feeling the heat? Take the summer survey

Many people live in homes that cannot be kept cool in summer, or warm in winter. This not only means high energy bills, it can also cause poor health.

As part of our efforts to help make more homes more efficient, Vinnies NSW is a proud supporter of the [Healthy Homes for Renters Campaign](#).

Over summer, the campaign is collaborating with Sweltering Cities to learn more about how the heat is impacting people across Australia. While for some, summer means days at the beach, for others it can mean sleepless nights in hot homes, worrying about your electricity bill, or leaving your house to go to a cooler location.

You can share your story of summer heat by [completing the 5-minute survey here](#). If you would like hard copies of the survey to distribute to people who may not have internet access, please email [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au)



## #ChangeTheHeart

Each year as we approach January 26, there is much discussion about the day's significance in our country's history, and how we might work towards a reconciled future. Over the last ten years, #ChangeTheHeart has encouraged Christians to come together in the lead up to the day to reflect on what this means for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This year, Auntie Jean Phillips, Senior Aboriginal Christian Leader, will lead a National Prayer Gathering on Tuesday, 25 January 2022 at 7:30pm. You can [watch online](#), [join a local gathering](#), or your parish or conference may wish to [sign up to host their own screening](#).

In coming weeks, Common Grace will also [share thoughts and ideas](#) on how people might respectfully engage in January 26.



## Events

*Mental Health and Accessing the NDIS*

9, 14 & 16 December 2021

[Register here](#)

*#ChangetheHeart National Prayer Gathering*

*led by Aboriginal Christian Leaders*

Tuesday 25 January 2022, 7:30pm

[More information here.](#)

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

**CONTACT US**