



Vinnies
good works

SOCIAL JUSTICE
NETWORK

Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for February

A busy start to 2022

We hope you enjoyed some much needed rest and re-connection over the holiday period. We know, however, that COVID-19 once again disrupted many people's plans, and that it continues to cause much grief and distress. We also recognise that it is people on low incomes, those in precarious work, and people already marginalised who continue to be most affected.

With the pandemic magnifying the impact of so many historically unjust laws and policies, work to shape a more equitable future matters more than ever. In helping to deepen the understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty in your communities, and in building support for much-needed solutions, members of the Vinnies social justice network are critical to this work. Over the year ahead, there will be dozens of opportunities to get more involved; the ongoing roll-out of key campaigns, especially [Build Homes, Build Hope](#); upcoming elections; the bi-annual social justice forum; and many other events along the way.

Behind the scenes, the Social Justice team will engage in relevant policy processes. As we do so, we will continue to draw on the experiences and views of Society members, employees, volunteers and supporters. Already, it's shaping up to be a busy year. The [National Housing and Homelessness Agreement is under review](#), and the [ten-year plan to end violence against women and children](#) is open for comment. In relation to cost-of-living issues, the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Scheme will be reviewed, and the Australian Energy Market Corporation is considering a [rule change to better protect energy customers affected by family violence](#). We also expect that the Department of Communities and Justice will begin consultations to inform the roll-out of the 75 new refuges announced last year.

Please contact social.justice@vinnies.org.au if you would like to suggest any issues we should raise in response to these processes. In particular, if you have experience assisting women and families escaping domestic violence, we would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about your experiences. We look forward to working with you over the year to come.

Elections ahead!

Following last year's string of political resignations, by-elections will be held in the seats of Willoughby, Monaro, Bega and Strathfield on February 12.

If you live in one of these electorates, this is an opportunity to engage with candidates seeking to represent your communities, and ensure they understand the issues affecting people on low incomes and those at risk of exclusion. In particular, it is an opportunity to raise awareness of the housing crisis and its impact on the people we assist, and find out what they plan to do to help increase the supply of new social housing.

The NSW Council of Social Services has put together a series of resources including statistics on poverty and disadvantage in [Bega](#), [Monaro](#) and [Strathfield](#), and fact sheets outlining key issues and proposed solutions. Like the Society, they recommend the NSW Government invests in 5000 new social housing homes per year. We encourage you to contact candidates in your electorate in support of these solutions. If you'd like more information, a template or advice, please contact social.justice@vinnies.org.au

With a Federal Election also just around the corner, we will similarly seek to use that as an opportunity to build support for the Society's social justice agenda. If you've already expressed interest in being part of this work, thank you. We will share resources and opportunities with you as they become available.

If you think you might like to get involved, we invite you to answer a few questions about what electorate you live in, and the kinds of actions you might be willing to take. You can [complete the two-minute survey here](#).



Action for Afghanistan

Following the tragic fall of Kabul in August last year, we joined with other organisations in calling on the Australian Government to accept a special intake of 20,000 additional refugees at risk of harm under the Taliban regime.

In January, the Government announced that while it will offer 15,000 places to Afghan people over the next four years, these places will not be additional. Instead, they will come from within Australia's existing humanitarian and family visa programs. This means people in other parts of the world who would otherwise have been brought to safety will miss out. Further, the Government has not addressed calls to grant permanent protection to people from Afghanistan already in Australia on Temporary Protection or Safe Haven Enterprise Visas.

Minister Hawke has reported that within the last five months there has been an unprecedented number of visa applications, with Afghan nationals making more than 32,500 applications for our humanitarian program on behalf of more than 145,000 individuals.

With so many people in need of protection, and with Australia's humanitarian program already in backlog, the Society will continue to call on the Government to do more for the people of Afghanistan during this time of need. [You can sign the petition, calling for Action for Afghanistan, here.](#)



Safe temperatures at home

Did you struggle to stay cool at home last week? If you are one of the 30% of people in NSW who rents your home, you are more likely to have found this a challenge. With property owners not required to make sure the homes they lease meet basic efficiency standards, renters can rack up huge energy bills trying to keep their homes within a safe temperature range. [You can read about Cass's experience, for example, here.](#)

You can also help efforts to help build a better understanding of how the heat is impacting people across Australia by completing a [5-minute survey here](#).

The results of this survey will inform the [Healthy Homes for Renters Campaign](#), supported by Vinnies, which is working to ensure all State and Territory Governments adopt legally enforceable energy efficiency standards to make rental properties safer.

SUMMER SURVEY



Events

***World day of prayer, reflection and action
against human trafficking***

8 February

A [prayer card is available here](#), and [other resources here](#)

***Join the National Apology Anniversary
Breakfast with speakers including a
member of the Kinchela Boys Home, and
Mr Kevin Rudd AC***

11 February, 11am-12pm (online)

[Register here](#)

World day of social justice

20 February

***Launch of ourPower: a vision for clean,
affordable, dependable energy for all***

24 February, 12-2pm (online)

[Register here](#)

Save the date: Social Justice Forum 2022

Saturday 28 May 2022 (North Sydney)

[Contact us for more info](#)

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

CONTACT US