



## Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for July

### Homelessness and older people

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has renewed calls for the NSW Government to address the challenge of homelessness by building 5,000 new social housing dwellings each year for the next ten years.

Our response to the [Parliamentary Inquiry into homelessness amongst older people](#) follows an increase in the number of older people seeking support from our members, volunteers and services. Factors that contribute to homelessness for people over the age of 55 include the high cost of housing, relationship breakdowns, domestic and family violence, and social isolation.

Speaking at the 18 July Inquiry Hearing, Brett Macklin, Director of Homelessness and Housing for the Society, said "neither the housing system nor the homelessness system is set up well to respond to the needs of older people experiencing homelessness."

The Society presented evidence alongside The Salvation Army, Community Housing Limited, Community Housing Industry Association and Women's Community Shelters, with a focus on social housing shortages and long wait lists, skyrocketing rents, inadequate social security payments, and a lack of wrap-around support services for the ageing population.

Organisations urged the NSW Government to work alongside the Federal Government and leverage State assets as well as the *Housing Australia Future Fund* to substantially increase the supply of social housing. Other recommendations included the expansion of rental subsidy programs to include older people, the continuation of the *Together Home* program, and an increase in brokerage funding for Specialist Homelessness Services and wrap-around services.

Suzy Pace, Team Leader of Our Lady of the Way and Macarthur Case Management stressed the long-term challenges of homelessness, particularly for older women and those fleeing domestic violence. "Obviously, housing is a prime focus here - more social and affordable housing. But we also need the wrap-around supports that are crucial to set people up for success," Suzy said.



## NSW Budget

While in some respects the NSW Government's budget, handed down on 21 June, was forward-thinking, missing from the equation was new investment in social housing.

[The St Vincent de Paul Society recognised the Budget's significant investment in early learning, and support for women's economic participation](#) - initiatives that have real potential to reduce future inequality.

But while the plan to allow some first home buyers to opt for land tax over stamp duty, together with the introduction of a new shared equity scheme, may help some people on low-to-middle incomes realise the dream of home ownership, these initiatives will not help people at risk of homelessness. For these people, [we need a much stronger housing safety net and this can only be achieved through increased supply of social and affordable housing](#).

While a focus on housing was also conspicuously absent from Labor's response to the Budget, the Shadow Treasurer, the Hon Daniel Mookhey, subsequently confirmed at the NCOSS Budget Breakfast that new investment in social housing would feature in the plan NSW Labor will take to the election.

To help ensure both major parties develop a clear and adequate response to the growing number of people who do not have a safe, secure and affordable place to call home, we will continue working to ensure these issues feature more prominently in the lead up to next

year's election. You can read more about our plans for Homelessness Week below, and stay tuned for more opportunities to contribute over the months ahead.



## Homelessness Week

In the first week of August, Homelessness Week raises awareness of the impact of homelessness in Australia. This year, the theme is 'To end homelessness we need a plan'. With the housing market failing to meet the needs of so many people in our community, social housing must be part of this plan.

During Homelessness Week, we're encouraging MPs across NSW to visit some of our homelessness services. This is an opportunity to meet people who've been directly impacted, gain insight into the many issues that contribute to homelessness, and better understand the scale of the response required from government. In 2020-21, over 47,000 clients presented to homelessness services in NSW in need of accommodation. But the needs of almost half these clients (48%) could not be met. People are spending longer in crisis and transitional accommodation services because there is nowhere else for them to go.

You can help continue to help build support for more investment in social housing by contributing to our letter writing campaign in the lead up to the March 2023 election. Write to the Premier about why you think homelessness needs to be addressed, and support the call for 5,000 new social housing homes every year for the next ten years ([see our guide here](#)). If you send the letter to us we'll make sure it gets to the Premier's office. If you post it directly, please email us a copy at [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au)

## Rosalie Rendu Forum 2022

Over the past few years our communities have endured devastating floods, droughts, bushfires and heatwaves. As we respond to increasingly severe and more frequent weather events, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW members, volunteers and employees have been on hand to help people who are trying to recover and rebuild their lives. As each disaster unfolds, we have seen more clearly how it is marginalised people and communities who are impacted the most.

Join us for our annual Rosalie Rendu Forum on 20 October 2022 as we discuss how we should respond to the challenges of climate change to avoid widening inequity, and better protect those most likely to feel its impact. The Forum will include a panel discussion with academic experts and those who have lived through recent disasters. This year's Rosalie Rendu Forum will be held online as a webinar, however we encourage you to come together within your own communities to hold satellite events across New South Wales.

To register, [please click here](#).



## Modern Slavery Workshop - last chance to register!

Modern Slavery affects tens of millions of people world-wide, including here in Australia. It comes in many forms and can be found in numerous industries including construction, cleaning, property maintenance and events. It can affect the people we assist both in rural and metropolitan settings.

Under the *Modern Slavery Act 2018*, the Society of St Vincent de Paul has obligations to assess and address any risk of modern slavery in our operations and supply chains.

Join us at 12 noon on Tuesday 26 July for the Modern Slavery webinar to find out more about modern slavery and what is being done to prevent it.

[Click here to register.](#)

Professor Martijn Boersma (University of Notre Dame) and Alison Rahill (Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Taskforce) will speak about the extent of modern slavery, what it looks like and what we can do if we encounter people who are harmed or at risk.

We'll talk about what Vinnies NSW is doing to address modern slavery and we will launch our latest Modern Slavery Statement. This event is being held in the week leading up to the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.



### **The Vincentian newsletter**

The Society currently has about 2,700 members, assisting communities all over NSW. Each quarter, members receive an electronic newsletter that includes operational and administrative updates, as well as a selection of 'good news stories' featuring the work of members from across the state.

If you would like to receive a copy of the newsletter, *The Vincentian*, please [click here](#) to send an email to the membership team, and they will add you to the mailing list. You can unsubscribe at any time, if you change your mind.

## Events

### **Tri-Diocesan Social Justice Reflection Evening**

Wednesday 20 July, 6-9pm

*Diocese of Parramatta, in partnership with the Archdiocese of Sydney and the Diocese of Broken Bay*

[Click here for more information](#)

### **Modern Slavery Workshop**

Tuesday 26 July 2022 at 12pm

*St Vincent de Paul Society NSW*

[Register here](#)

### **Lived Experience e-Symposium**

23 & 24 August 2022

*Perspectives 2022 - Finding North Network*

[Click here for more information](#)

### **Rosalie Rendu Forum 2022**

Thursday 20 October 2022 at 6pm

*St Vincent de Paul Society NSW*

[Register here](#)

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

**CONTACT US**