



## Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for August 2022

### The Society shows its support for the Uluru Statement

At the end of July, the Federal Government released recommended wording for a referendum question on enshrining a First Nations Voice to Parliament in the Constitution. Establishing a Voice is one of three elements outlined in the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The new government has committed to hold a referendum in this term of Parliament.

Earlier in July, the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia adopted a recommendation to support the Uluru Statement. The Plenary Council, "...endorses the Uluru Statement from the Heart and encourages engagement with processes for implementing the Statement, including local, regional and national truth-telling efforts."

The Society's leadership also re-affirmed their support for the Uluru Statement at this year's NAIDOC Week event, *Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!* The NSW CEO and President along with the Chair of the Board all co-signed a copy of the Uluru Statement (pictured).

The Uluru Statement calls for the establishment of a First Nations Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the Constitution. It also calls for the establishment of a Makarrata Commission to undertake a process of treaty-making and truth-telling. This agenda is represented in the calls for Voice, Treaty, Truth.

The Social Justice Team are developing resources to support our members, volunteers and staff take action in support of the Uluru Statement as we work towards the coming referendum. Our new [explainer on the Uluru Statement](#) and Voice, Truth and Treaty is now available on our [website](#).

You can [read more about the Society's support for the Uluru Statement and a Voice to Parliament online](#) or visit the [Uluru Statement from the Heart website](#) to learn more about the Statement.



## Housing and Homelessness

As we start the countdown to next year's NSW State Election, members of the Social Justice Network are continuing to raise political and community awareness of the pressing need for government intervention to ensure everyone has a place to call home.

Earlier this month, a delegation of members met with the MP for Clarence, Christopher Gulaptis, and the Deputy Premier, Paul Toole, to share stories and statistics highlighting the lack of access to affordable housing in the region, and the Society's work supporting people impacted by the growing housing crisis and other cost-of-living pressures. In particular, they raised concerns about the added pressure on housing - being felt across the entire region - as a result of the 2022 floods. They also discussed the lack of short and long-term housing solutions for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence.

Mr Gulaptis agreed to meet again in November to continue these discussions, and once the Society has finalised its statement of election priorities.

Pictured below from left to right are Paul Edgar - Clarence Orara Regional President, Joe Feeney - President Maclean Conference, Paul Toole - Deputy Premier NSW, Gail Gaudron - Lismore Central Council President, Dave Byrnes - Grafton Conference President, Alan Schofield - Yamba Conference President, Brian Cullen - Lismore Social Justice Representative, and Chris Gulaptis - Member for Clarence.



## Parliamentary Flood Inquiry

That [hundreds of people remain homeless](#) following the 2022 floods shows the vital need to better prepare for future disasters that will result in a loss of homes. Embedding temporary and long-term housing options in State emergency and recovery plans is one of the 37 recommendations put forward by the NSW Parliament's [inquiry into the response to this year's flooding events](#). This recommendation reflects concerns raised in the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW submission to the Inquiry, where we outlined how the floods have compounded the existing housing crisis. Other recommendations put forward by the Society, and echoed in the Committee's report, include the need to provide additional financial aid to flood affected individuals, and to better integrate the role of community groups - such as the Society - into recovery plans.



## Organising for climate justice

In early August, a group of Vinnies members and employees attended the Sydney Alliance convention - *Together in Dignity*, reconnecting with 237 leaders from diverse communities and organisations across Sydney.

The night was an opportunity to discuss the kind of city we want to help shape and share stories of the pressures experienced over the last few years.

Climate Justice was one of the night's four main themes, with member of Vinnies' Western Sydney Social Justice Network, Ian Epondulan, speaking about how his community has been impacted by our changing climate and the rising cost of housing and energy. In response, Ian has supported migrant communities to better navigate the energy market through the Voices for Power program, signed his church up as a heat refuge, and helped secure support for his church to go solar. But he also sees the need for change on a much wider scale and invited others to join him in making their voices heard.

Next steps include listening events in Parramatta and Bankstown to help better understand how our changing climate is exacerbating the pressures confronting families and communities, and to inform solutions that we will take to MPs and leaders. To receive an invitation to a listening event, please email us at [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au)



## Rosalie Rendu Forum

On Thursday 20 October 2022, we are looking forward to coming together online for the annual Rosalie Rendu Forum. The theme for this year's Rosalie Rendu Forum is "*Climate Justice: working together for a more equitable and sustainable future*". Please join us as we hear from academic experts and those who have lived through recent disasters, and discuss what's needed to avoid the worst injustices of climate change and better protect those more likely to feel its impact.

While the Rosalie Rendu Forum will be held online this year as a webinar, we encourage you to come together within your own communities in COVID-safe spaces to hold satellite events across New South Wales. Please [click here](#) to register by 18 October 2022.



## Bishop's Statement on Domestic and Family Violence

In February 2022, The Australian Catholic Bishop's Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace released their [2022-2023 Social Justice Statement](#). The theme of the Statement is *Respect: Confronting violence and abuse*. It points out that the roots of Domestic and Family Violence "lie in the abuse of power to control and dominate others" and that "this stands in contrast to the relationships to which God calls us".

St Vincent de Paul Society members and volunteers across NSW have been responding to the needs of victim survivors of Domestic and Family Violence for decades. We provide 12 specialised Domestic and Family Violence case management, supported and transitional accommodation services across Sydney and in Southern and South Western NSW.

Most recently, the Policy and Advocacy Team have also made submissions on coercive control, police responses, and older women experiencing homelessness due to Domestic and Family Violence.

As a Society, we are committed to addressing Domestic and Family Violence and ensuring that victim survivors receive the support they need. We have also made a commitment to better understand the issue within our communities where St Vincent de Paul is playing an active role, and this includes running workshops with St Vincent de Paul members and volunteers.

Next year we will release a St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Social Justice Statement outlining our position on Domestic and Family Violence. To provide input into this Statement, please email [social.justice@vinnies.org.au](mailto:social.justice@vinnies.org.au)



## Events

### **Domestic and Family Violence Forum**

23 August 2022, 10:30am - 12pm

*St Vincent de Paul Society VIC*

To register, please email:

[tracey.thomas@svdp-vic.org.au](mailto:tracey.thomas@svdp-vic.org.au)

### **Advanced Community Organising**

**National Training - Hunter Region NSW**

25 - 30 September 2022 (6 day training)

Sydney Alliance

[Register here](#)

### **Lived Experience e-symposium**

23 & 24 August 2022

*Perspectives 2022 - Finding North Network*

[Click here for more information](#)

### **Rosalie Rendu Forum**

Thursday 20th October 2022, 6-7.30pm

Four expert panellists

[Click here to register](#)

**Beyond the Bushfires: Post-traumatic  
Growth**

25 August 2022, 1-2:30pm

NCOSS

[Click here for more information](#)

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

**CONTACT US**