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good works

SOCIAL JUSTICE
NETWORK

Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for September 2022

World Day of Migrants and Refugees

Sunday 25 September marks the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. This day is an opportunity to reflect on the conflict, persecution and displacement faced by refugees across the world, raise awareness, and take action to help create better systems to support the safety, security, and wellbeing of all people. This will be the 108th event since 1914, with Pope Francis selecting the theme "Building the Future with Migrants and Refugees".

The UNHCR estimates there are 89.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. Standing in solidarity we recognise the strength and resilience of migrants and refugees, many of whom have faced extreme adversity yet continue to fight for brighter futures for themselves and future generations.

There are many ways that you can participate in the World Day of Migrants and Refugees to actively contribute to this fight for change:

- The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACRMO) has developed [a valuable toolkit](#) which includes useful resources for churches and community groups such as reflections, prayers and stories to be shared.
- The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA), co-convened by Jesuit Social Services and Jesuit Refugee Service, is holding a National Week of Prayer and Action. You can find [thought-provoking stories and useful resources here](#).
- "CAPSA in Conversation: building a better future together" will be held on Tuesday 27 September. [Register via this link](#).
- The Federal Government has also introduced a new initiative, the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP). This is an amazing opportunity for community members to come together to welcome new Australians and provide support and solidarity. [Further information here](#).

Building the **future** with migrants and refugees



Minister visits the Matthew Talbot

Earlier this month, the Minister for Families and Communities, Natasha Maclaren-Jones, visited the Society's Matthew Talbot homelessness service in Newcastle. This was a great opportunity to talk about the how the service works, the people it supports, and how the Society's contributions enable it to offer additional support to clients seeking to find a home and maintain a tenancy.

Ryan Prior, Manager, spoke about how the demographic of people experiencing homeless is changing. The service is seeing more older people, more families, and more people who have never needed this kind of help before. The tightening of the private rental market has meant that people who were previously just able to scrape by can no longer afford a home.

Also discussed were barriers to accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) faced by people experiencing homelessness, with people missing out on potentially life-changing support as a result. Last year, the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS recommended dedicated Homelessness Liaison Officers be funded to help overcome these barriers, but this strategy has yet to be implemented.

The Society appreciated the opportunity to showcase our service, and discuss how we can continue partnering with Government to respond to homelessness in our communities, and work to prevent it.



Build Homes, Build Hope

Recent budget estimates revealed that the NSW Government has achieved only 9% of its commitment to deliver 23,000 new and replacement social housing dwellings by 2025 through the Communities Plus program.

With total commitments already falling well short of the number of dwellings needed to address the long waitlist and rising homelessness, this failure to deliver is of deep concern. The Society will continue to call for at least 5,000 social housing homes per year – an investment our modelling suggests this would reduce the social housing waitlist by 75%, house 16,000 people experiencing homelessness, and provide reprieve for 33,000 households experiencing housing stress.

You can help secure the political will needed to back this investment by joining our letter writing campaign in the lead up to the March 2023 election.

Send us a hand-written letter stating why homelessness needs to be addressed and explaining why you think the government should deliver 5,000 new social housing homes every year for the next ten years: we'll make sure it gets to the Premier's office.

Please also encourage your friends and colleagues to write a letter. We've prepared a short video that can be used to raise awareness of the importance of social housing [here](#), and a [campaign guide for letter writing can be downloaded here](#). If you'd like any support to run a letter-writing workshop with your conference or in your community, don't hesitate to contact us at social.justice@vinnies.org.au

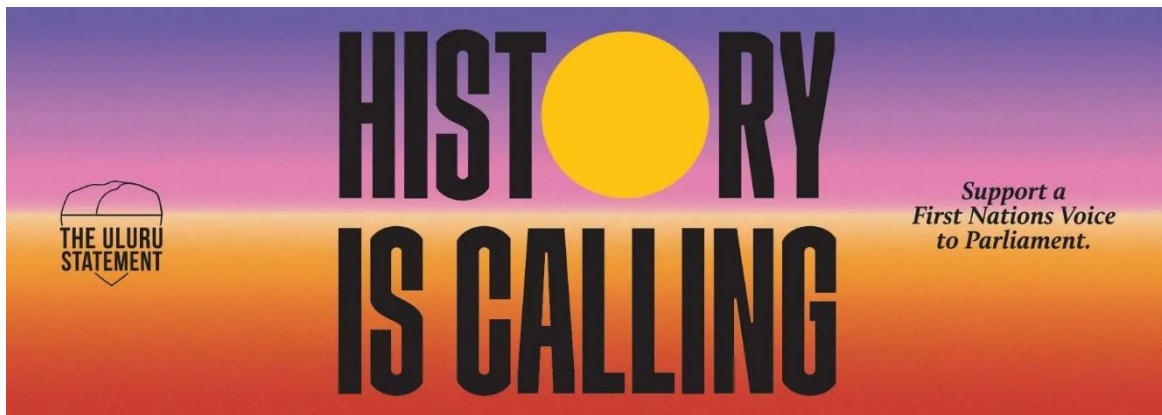


Why The Society supports the Uluru Statement

In commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the United Nations' adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) on 13 September, The Society released a fact sheet about why we are proud to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The resource, [Why The Society supports the Uluru Statement](#), is the third in a series of resources to support our networks to learn more about the Uluru Statement and its calls for

Voice, Treaty, Truth. It is part of our commitment to reconciliation and upholding the rights of First Nations people. Read the fact sheet on our website [here](#).

In November, the Uluru Statement will receive the Sydney Peace Prize, with Professor Megan Davis to deliver the 2021-22 keynote address at the Awards Ceremony on Thursday 10 November at Sydney Town Hall. [Tickets are available here](#).



Part-win for healthy home advocates

In a part-win for healthy home advocates, [Building Ministers nationally have agreed](#) to increase energy standards for new homes in the National Construction Code. This will see minimum energy efficiency ratings increase from 6 to 7 Stars, and a requirement for homes to meet an annual energy use budget, such as by using efficient appliances.

The Society supported the national community campaign to improve building energy standards as an important protection for renters and the environment. The agreement, however, does not relate to existing buildings, many of which highly energy inefficient and leave residents and tenants to bear the cost financially and on their health and well-being. [A recent report by Better Renting](#) found that many NSW renters live in homes colder than the WHO's recommended minimum of 18 degrees Celsius more than 85 per cent of the time. NSW homes are also some of the most humid in the country, causing ongoing mould issues. The findings highlight the need for minimum standards for rental housing to drive energy efficiency retrofits, which is another of the Society's advocacy priorities.

Disappointingly, NSW refused to adopt the silver Livable Housing Design standards now included in the National Construction Code that would require new homes to have accessibility features to make them suitable for people of all abilities and life stages. The Society will continue to advocate for accessible housing to be regulated in NSW so that all people can live with dignity in their homes, whatever their needs.

If you or someone you assist has lived experience of rental housing that is inaccessible or subject to temperature extremes and are willing to share your story to support our advocacy work, please email us at social.justice@vinnies.org.au



Anti-Poverty Week

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Anti-Poverty Week - an opportunity to raise awareness of poverty and help catalyse the action needed to address it. Poverty rates in Australia, the so-called 'lucky country' and one of the wealthiest in the world, have barely shifted since 2002; for children, they're increasing. More than 1 in 6 Australian children are currently living in poverty, and children living in sole parent families have a poverty rate of 39.4%, three times that of couple families (13.1%).

This Anti-Poverty week, which runs from 16-22 October, we are calling on Parliamentarians to commit to halving child poverty by 2030, in line with our obligations to the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

As a major sponsor of Anti-Poverty Week, the St Vincent de Paul Society believes we must work together to ensure that children's health and wellbeing can flourish, and parents and guardians have every chance to support their family. At a bare minimum, this means every child should have a home, and be able to access essentials such as food and school supplies. Right now, this is not possible for many families. The [Anti-Poverty Week website](#) has useful ways you can pledge your support to halving child poverty by 2030 including fact sheets, promotional kits, ways to get involved and other resources.

Events

World Day of Migrants and Refugees

Sunday 25 September 2022

More information can be found [here](#)

Rosalie Rendu Forum

Thursday 20 October, 6pm

[Click here to register](#)

CAPSA in Conversation: building a better future together

Tuesday 27 September 2022, 6.30pm

More information can be found [here](#)

Please register for this event [here](#)

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

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