



Vinnies
good works

SOCIAL JUSTICE
NETWORK

Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for February 2023

45 days till NSW votes

With just 45 days till the NSW election, people across NSW have been working to secure political commitment to the actions needed to ensure everyone has a safe, secure and affordable place to call home.

In recent weeks, members of the Social Justice Network have met or arranged to meet with candidates from Coffs Harbour and Clarence in the North to Canterbury in Sydney and Campbelltown in the South, and others in between. For the most part, current MPs or candidates have been sympathetic - recognising the growing housing crisis and agreeing on the need for Government intervention. But this sympathy must now translate into concrete commitments followed by action.

To help ensure addressing the high rates of housing insecurity, housing stress, and homelessness are a top priority for the next NSW Government, here are some actions you can take:

- **Organise a delegation** to meet your local MP or candidates - all the information you need to do this, including electorate-based factsheets - is available on the [social justice website](#), or contact social.justice@vinnies.org.au for assistance.
- **[Endorse our Election Statement](#)**, and ask your family or friends to do the same
- **Show your support at an upcoming event** - [Ageing on the Edge releases new research on Monday 6 February](#), Homelessness NSW and CHIA are hosting [Housing for All Town Hall event on Thursday 16 February](#), and we'll be part of the [Sydney Alliance Assembly on Tuesday 28 February](#) with the Treasurer, Matt Kean, and Shadow Treasurer, Daniel Mookhey (see more information below).

Thank you for helping build momentum for action in this unique window of opportunity.



NSW Social Housing waitlist grows

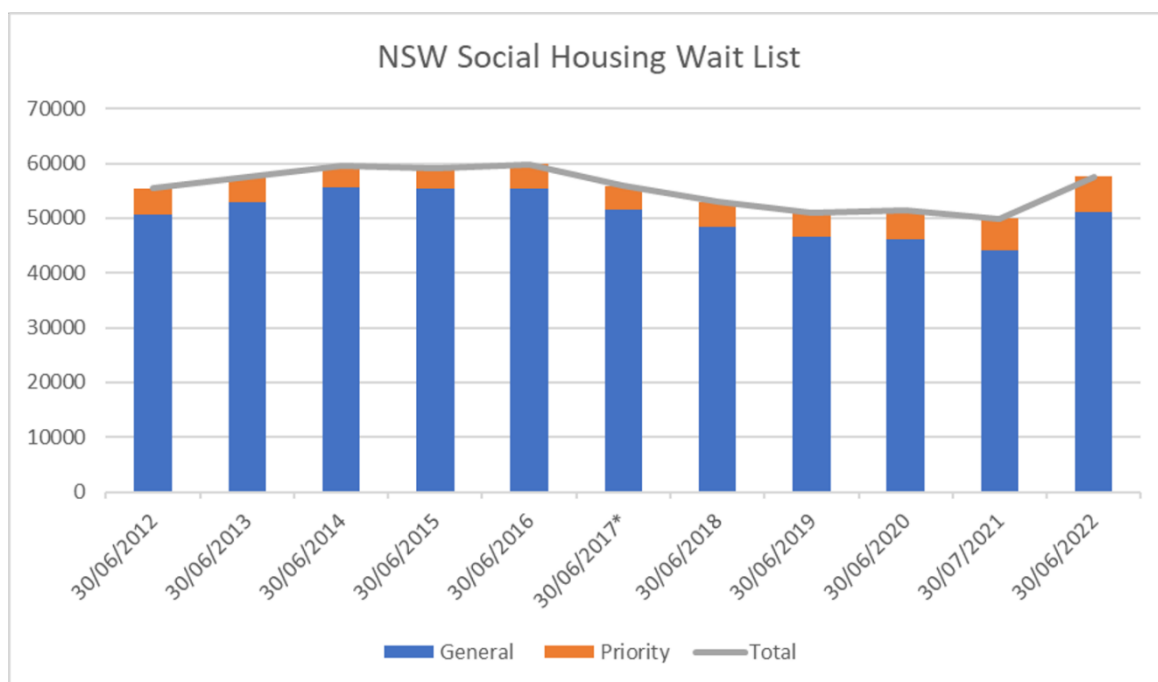
New [data from the Department of Communities and Justice](#) released before Christmas reveals a 15% increase in demand for social housing, with 57,550 applicants in 2022. This equates to more than 125,000 people in need of social housing across the state. As illustrated in the graph below, this is the greatest number of applicants since 2016.

As at 30 June 2022 the number of applicants on both the general and priority housing lists increased from 49,928 applicants in 2021 up to 57,550 applicants as at 30 June 2022. The number of applicants on the general waitlist rose from 49,928 to 51,031, while the priority housing waitlist increased from 5,801 to 6,519 over the financial year.

Regional areas, including the Central Tablelands, Western NSW, Hunter New England, Illawarra Shoalhaven and North Coast areas, saw some of the biggest increases in demand across the state, of around 20-30 per cent in most areas. The Bathurst region saw a massive spike in demand, with the number of social housing applicants increasing by 76 per cent.

Sadly, the true extent of the need for housing is likely to be grossly under-represented. Stringent eligibility criteria see many applicants rejected. Others are removed from the waitlist for not responding to DCJ correspondence in a timely manner. With wait times in excess of 10 years in some areas, many applicants simply give up on being allocated a home and drop off the list.

The Society has issued a [media release](#) urgently calling for increased social housing to meet the growing demand, in line with our NSW 2023 state election statement recommendation of investment in 5,000 new social housing dwellings per year. The Social Justice Team is drafting a more in-depth report on the NSW Social Housing Wait List over time that is planned for release ahead of the March state election.



Join the Sydney Alliance NSW Election Assembly - 28 February

Calling all Vinnies Members, Volunteers and Staff in the greater Sydney area. The Society of St Vincent de Paul invites you to the Sydney Alliance NSW Election Assembly on Tuesday evening, 28th February in Westmead.

This is the chance to join with other faith and community groups to raise our voice in support of political commitment to assist vulnerable members of the community and address the injustices that cause poverty and hardship. This is an important opportunity to influence the major parties on the changes we want to see on addressing the housing crisis, making renting fairer and tackling the rising cost of living, especially energy costs.

We have commitments from NSW Treasurer Matt Kean and Shadow Treasurer Daniel Mookey to attend and respond to the voices of the community. This assembly is about finding concrete solutions and is an opportunity for people to know they can take action and improve the lives of the people we assist.

The Assembly will be hosted by the Parramatta Diocese at the Morely Centre, 2 Darcy Road, Westmead. Arrive at 6.00pm for a 6.15pm start - finishing at 8.15pm.

This is a free event, but donations to cover the event will be gratefully received. RSVP required. Don't forget to identify yourself as being with the St Vincent de Paul Society.

[Register your attendance here.](#)

Please spread the word and join us to ensure a strong Vinnies presence on the night.



Uluru Statement from the Heart

The campaign for a First Nations Voice to parliament could begin in February with Linda Burney, Minister for Indigenous Australians, announcing at the start of the year that the Government plans to introduce legislation on the Voice referendum in March. The Government would then aim to pass the legislation through parliament in May. This would allow the public vote to be held as early as August, although it could be held as late as November.

At the end of 2022, members of the Society's Uluru Statement Working Group came together to review the Society's advocacy strategy and update our plans for 2023. Having focused on developing [information resources](#) and awareness-raising in 2022, the next phase of the strategy will prioritise building the capacity of our networks to take action in support of a yes vote on the Voice through conference kits, schools kits and collateral in our public-facing sites.



The Feast Day of St Josephine Bakhita - 8 February

8 February is the Feast Day of St Josephine Bakhita, Patron Saint of victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. Having herself been sold into slavery as a child and experiencing the horrors of human trafficking, she is a source of hope for victims and survivors and an inspiration to all who work to prevent this crime.

Over 40 million people are enslaved world-wide. In Australia, around 15,000 people are enslaved, with the additional risk that procurement through international supply chains exposed to slavery adds to the global suffering. Under the *Modern Slavery Act 2018*, Vinnies works to assess and prevent the risk of modern slavery in our operations and supply chains. Our [most recent Modern slavery Statement can be found here](#).



Events

Housing for All - NSW Pre Election

Town Hall public event

16 February 2023

Homelessness NSW and the Community

Housing Industry Association NSW

[Register here.](#)

NSW Financial Inclusion Network election statement launch

22 February, 10am-1pm

UNSW City Campus

[Register your interest via email](#)

NSW Election Assembly - Westmead

28 February 2023

The Sydney Alliance

[Register here](#)

Indigenous Suicide Prevention Forum

21 - 23 March 2023

Australian Indigenous Psychologists

Association

[Register here.](#)

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

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