



Vinnies
good works

SOCIAL JUSTICE
NETWORK

Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for March 2023

Major parties' rental policies announced in lead up to election

With just weeks until the people of NSW determine who will lead our state for the next four years, the major parties' positions on homes are becoming clearer. At the end of last week, the NSW Liberal Party released its rental policy committing to end no-grounds evictions for rolling leases. This represents a significant victory after years of concerted advocacy efforts by renters, the community sector and our members. At the recent Sydney Alliance Assembly the Labor Party went further and promised to also introduce reasonable grounds terminations at the end of fixed term leases as well as periodic leases.

While the major parties have recognised the need for more social and affordable housing, commitments have been limited to planning targets. Labor has pledged 30% social and affordable housing on surplus government land and the Liberals have committed to the same target on Transport Asset Holding Enterprise land.

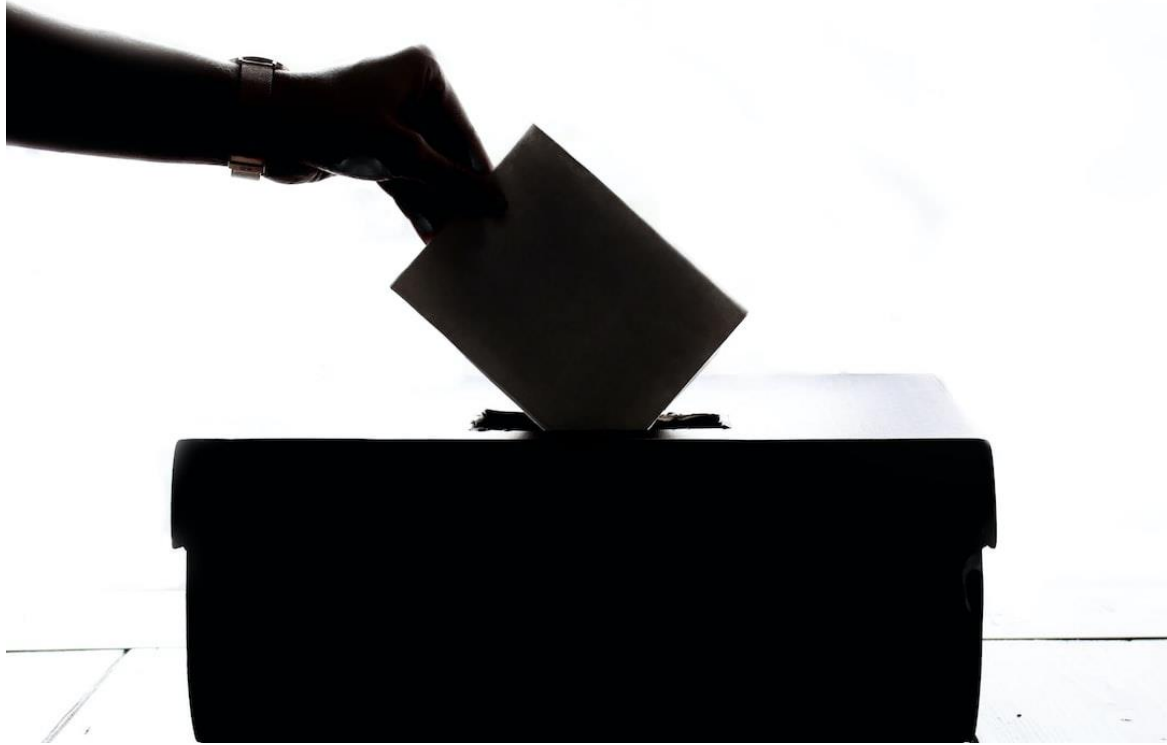
In the lead up to the election, the Society's Social Justice Network members have been meeting with local candidates to raise the issues of housing insecurity, rental stress and homelessness experienced by the people we assist, and to seek commitments to ensure everyone has a safe, secure and affordable place to call home. Conference members have attended a local candidates forum in Bowral while others have met with candidates in Campbelltown, Camden and Wilcannia / Forbes.

There is still time to meet with your local Member of Parliament or candidate. See our [social justice website](#) for resources and information, including candidate meeting guides and electorate-based factsheets, or contact social.justice@vinnies.org.au for assistance.

The Society has continued to seek meetings with key portfolio holders about our [Housing Justice: A Home for Everyone, 2023 Election Statement](#). At the end of February, the Society met with NSW Planning Minister Anthony Roberts' adviser to discuss our recommendations and seek commitments to housing justice. The Society has also met with the Shadow Treasurer in the lead up to the Sydney Alliance Assembly (more below). And we have been

active in the [media](#) making comments about ending no-grounds evictions and the ban on pets in rentals, along with the need for minimum energy efficiency standards in rentals.

The NSW State Election takes place on Saturday 25 March.



Positive news for people seeking asylum

In February this year, the Federal Government announced they would open a pathway to permanent protection for refugees who are eligible to hold or who currently hold a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV).

For the past decade, thousands of refugees in our communities have been living with the uncertainty of temporary protection, but this announcement will mean they no longer have to worry about repeatedly reapplying for their visa and demonstrating their need for ongoing safety. They will have the chance to permanently call Australia home.

Of the 19,000 people on TPVs and SHEVs, almost 9,000 people will need to make applications to be considered for a permanent visa. The approximate 10,000 others will need to continue to engage in application, review and/or appeal processes. Once people receive their permanent visa, known as a "Resolution of Status Visa", they will be able to sponsor

family members through the migration program. For many, it has been over a decade since they have seen their family and loved ones.

It is estimated that the process of converting temporary protection visas into permanent ones will take approximately 12 months. It is vital that people receive access to appropriate legal advice and assistance during this time.

While this is welcome news, the Society remains concerned about those people whose claims for asylum had already been rejected via the unfair 'fast-track process', whose only avenue for further review remains Ministerial Intervention. St Vincent de Paul Society is calling on the Government to end the 'fast track' assessment process in line with Labor's 2021 Election commitment, and immediately suspend detention or deportation for those who have been rejected.

Do you know someone on a Temporary Protection Visa or Safe Haven Enterprise visa that needs help?

The Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) have launched a telephone hotline for people on TPVS/SHEVS who need to seek advice: 02 8317 6505, or you can email admin@racs.org.au.

RACS have also prepared a [fact sheet](#) and over the month of March will be running 14 information sessions in a range of languages. To learn more about these information sessions and how to get help, visit <https://www.racs.org.au/tpv-shev-processing>.



Sydney Alliance Assembly unites for the Common Good

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW members and leadership were among over 45 diverse community organisations, unions and religious organisations united in an Assembly calling for social justice in the 2023 State Election. The over 900-strong Assembly was held in Westmead on Tuesday 28 February.

Matt Kean (NSW Treasurer), Daniel Mookhey (Shadow Treasurer) and Jenny Leong (NSW Greens spokesperson on Housing) headlined the political attendees, while speakers with lived experience shared moving personal testimonies highlighting why our politicians need to act.

With the current cost of living and housing crisis leaving a growing number of people in precarity, including many needing to seek assistance from organisations such as the Society for the first time, the Assembly called on the State's political leaders to commit to eight asks on social and affordable housing, climate and cost of living, and belonging and democracy.

On the night, both major parties agreed to radically boost the supply of social housing and that all new affordable housing will remain in perpetuity. They also agreed to meet with the Sydney Alliance within the first 100 days after forming government to discuss issues facing temporary migrants. Both parties also agreed to consultation on minimum energy efficiency standards in rentals.

While Labor stated its commitment to ending no-grounds evictions on fixed term and rolling leases, the Treasurer would not be drawn on rental policy. Three days after the Assembly the Liberal Party announced it would introduce reasonable grounds evictions on rolling leases.

The Society has been a part of the Sydney Alliance since its Founding Assembly in 2011. In this 2023 State Election Assembly, Vinnies has worked closely with other organisations to bring its policies on social housing, rental security and homelessness services to the negotiating table.

Our thanks to all the Society's members, volunteers and staff who attended this important Assembly.



Yes! Campaign launches

Society representatives participated in the Yes 23 campaign launch last month in support of a First Nations Voice to Parliament. The campaign is seeking to build community understanding, awareness and support for the referendum to be held later this year.

Campaign resources, including a flyer and guide to talking about the Voice are on the [Yes 23 website](#).

The Referendum Working Group also met last month and affirmed that the referendum is about the principle of enshrining a Voice in the Constitution, with the model to be determined by Parliament after the referendum and after consultations.

The Society supports the Uluru Statement and the Voice as a social justice imperative to redress the wrongs of the past. The Voice will give First Nations Peoples a say in decisions about them and deliver real change to improve their health and wellbeing. We have a range of resources about the Uluru Statement and the Society's position on our [website](#).



Events

Heatwaves, Health and Hot Homes Candidate Forum

9 March 2023

Thornton Community Centre, Penrith

[Register here.](#)

Indigenous Suicide Prevention Forum

21 - 23 March 2023

Australian Indigenous Psychologists
Association

[Register here.](#)

Homelessness and mental health: Systemic change for a better future

16 March 2023

Mental Health Coordinating Council

[Register here.](#)

Refugee Week 2023

18 - 24 June 2023

[Click here](#) to learn more

Community Sector Rental Energy Efficiency Blueprint Launch

10 March

Healthy Homes for Renters

[Register here](#)

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

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