

# MARCH 2012 NEWSLETTER

For Members and Friends of  
Catholic Social Services Victoria



Catholic Social Services  
**Victoria**

The **season of Lent** commenced on 22 March, Ash Wednesday, and continues through to Good Friday, on Friday 6 April. It is part of the cycle of change and recurrence that mark the year. [Click here](#) for a Lenten reflection that highlighting the inextricable link between love of God and love of other people, and thus with the work of Catholic social services.



**Easter** season follows soon. It is in the Easter Jesus that we find our hope. As Cardinal Basil Hume put it: 'The great gift of Easter is hope - Christian hope which makes us have that confidence in God, in his ultimate triumph, and in his goodness and love, which nothing can shake'. It is this hope that enables us to reach for the stars in our endeavours to build a more just and compassionate society, and it is in sharing this hope with others that we make progress in those endeavours.

**Easter hope and blessings to all from Catholic Social Services Victoria**

**Welcome** to Patrice Scales (pictured), recently elected Chair of the Council of Catholic Social Services Victoria, and to newly elected Council members Tony Hollamby, Robyn Roberts and Gerard Jones. Congratulations to Fr Joe Caddy on his re-election. Farewell and thanks to outgoing Chair Peter Bearsley, and outgoing members Marilyn Webster and Micaela Cronin.

See [report](#) below on recent changes and current Council membership.



## *In this Issue:*

### **CSSV Developments**

- [CSSV Council](#) elections and composition
- Commissioning [Mass and AGM](#)
- Welcoming [Helen Burt](#)
- [Recent events and activities](#)

### **Coming CSSV Events**

- Workshop on **Induction for Mission** - Monday 16 April
- Workshop on **Fundraising** - Monday 30 April
- **Focus on Mental Health**, a series of three morning seminars for staff and managers in community services. 8 May, 26 June and 31 July
- Forum on **Asylum Seeker Settlement** - Friday 11 May.
- Breakfast Briefing, Tuesday 17 July: **Understanding the use of social media** to solve personal problems, with Professor Ruth Webber of Australian Catholic University
- 2012 **CSSV Annual Dinner** – Friday 24 August



## [Sector Developments and Events](#)

### ***CSSV Council elections and composition***

Congratulations to **Patrice Scales** on her recent election as **Chair of the Council of Catholic Social Services Victoria**. Among other things, Patrice brings to this role a history of leadership and governance experience with CSSV member organisations and beyond; a career in communications, and earlier formation as a full time YCW worker.

The 14 March 2012 AGM expressed its thanks to Peter Bearsley, who completed six year service as Chair of Council. Marilyn Webster paid tribute to the experience, commitment and wisdom that Peter brought to bear over these years.

.Congratulations too to the others who joined the Council at the AGM:

Tony Hollamby, CEO of St John of God ACCORD

Robyn Roberts, CEO of Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services

Gerard Jones, Executive Director Operations, MacKillop Family Services

and to Fr Joe Caddy, CEO of CatholicCare, who was re-elected for another term.

This gives the Council a wide-range of experience and involvement across the spectrum of current service provision – see [www.css.org.au/council.html](http://www.css.org.au/council.html) for full membership.

The meeting also expressed thanks to Marilyn Webster and Micaela Cronin, who completed their service on Council, and to others who stood for Council positions. Marilyn warranted special mention: she steps down after more than a decade of service as a member of Council and a staff member at CSSV, and will continue as a member of our Policy & Advocacy Committee.

At the first meeting of the new Council on Friday 23 March, the process began of forging new bonds around the Council table, to better enable the group to work together to advance the broad mission of building a more just and compassionate Victoria.

### ***Commissioning Mass and AGM***

Thanks to the members and friends who joined us on 14 March for our **Commissioning Mass and Annual General Meeting**. All Saints Church was a wonderful setting for the Mass, and their parish hall, and, later, St Mary's House of Welcome, were ideal for the occasion. [Click here](#) for the Executive Director's Report to the meeting.

Thanks to **Sr Margaret Mary Flynn ibvm** (pictured) for her inspiring address on *Responding to the needs of the marginalised*; to **Bishop Peter Connors** for presiding at the Mass; **Fr Tony Kerin** for preaching the Homily, and the many others who contributed.

**Sr Margaret** challenged us not to get overly focussed on government funding requirements but rather, be able to demonstrate to government funders that creative program design by our agencies can achieve major results. Overall, Sr Margaret highlighted the need to remain true to our mission, always drawing on the energy and preferences of marginalised groups to frame our own program responses.



**Fr Tony** in [his homily](#) focused on the nature of gift and of gratuity, as reflected on by Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Charity in Truth*. Fr Tony concluded:

We ought not just fulfill the contracts for which we have tendered, but rather go beyond that, to offer a free gift over and above the exchange of services contracted for. In our manner of working, we must bring the sense of the closeness of our God to those with whom we work, we



must exude a spirit of cooperation with other agencies that might see them work more effectively too. Then the great gift that God has given to us, in our calling to serve the needy, will become more clearly a shared gift taken up not just by our colleagues but also by those for whom we work.

### ***Welcoming Helen Burt to CSSV***

A warm welcome to Helen Burt, who recently joined CSSV as a part time senior policy adviser. Helen brings to this role a distinguished career in general management, service delivery and policy analysis in the human services sector. Helen's experience includes work in relation to child protection, disability services, and mental health.

Helen has been a member of the CSSV Policy & Advocacy Committee, and has worked with us for some time on specific projects. She is currently working on a policy paper on housing; and on issues relating to disability services, criminal justice and mental health services. Helen can be contacted on [hburt@css.org.au](mailto:hburt@css.org.au), tel 9287 5566.

### ***Recent events and activities***

#### **Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children**

Thanks to Mr Bill Scales (pictured) and our many guests for a most informative Breakfast Briefing on **Protecting vulnerable children**, on Tuesday 6 March 2012. The briefing focused on the wide-ranging [report](#) from the **Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry** that was tabled in the Victorian parliament on 28 February 2012. Mr Scales was a member of the Inquiry Panel.

A response from Catholic Social Services Victoria to the report noted that the protection, care and growth of our children are the responsibility of us all, but the Government has a central role to play. 'For too long services essential for the wellbeing of Victoria's most vulnerable children and families have been rationed because of resource limitations.' The report has provided a strong rationale for resource allocation, and for systems changes – [click here](#) for a fuller report.



Some of the recommendations are directed at the Church, including a call for increased reporting requirements, and for that 'a formal investigation should be conducted into the processes by which religious organisations respond to the criminal abuse of children by religious personnel.' The Archbishop has advised that he is studying the many recommendations, and Minister Wooldridge has indicated that the Government will be meeting with religious organisations and others as part of considering recommendations from the Inquiry.

CSSV will continue to work with member organisations and with other parts of the Church in following up this report, to advance the policies and funding that are needed to better protect vulnerable children and families in Victoria.

#### **Health inequality and justice**

Thanks to Fr Frank Brennan SJ for an inspiring presentation on 22 February 2012 on **Health Inequality: A justice challenge for Catholic Health and Welfare Providers**. Fr Frank led us to reflect on the scriptural imperative to serve those most in need, and outlined the strong links between socio-economic standing and health, and between a healthy community and an equitable one. He challenged everyone present to engage with these broader issues, as part of their mission of service. [Click here](#) for a CSSV report on the Breakfast that was published in *Kairos*. Thanks to Catholic Health Australia for co-hosting the event, as part of broader cooperation between Catholic health and welfare providers.





## Criminal justice reform

CSSV continues active engagement with issues of criminal justice reform.

A [recent paper](#), prepared for Catholic Social Services Victoria by Brendan McCarthy, Independent Counsel and Consultant, and published on our website, reflects on key aspects of some of the reforms that are being introduced, and on the social and political setting in which they have arisen.

The core of McCarthy's argument is that the reforms such as the abolition of suspended sentences and creation of mandatory minimum sentences, by restricting judicial discretion to consider each case and each offender on their merits, could force members of the judiciary to impose unjust sentences, and may thus be counter-productive and lead to a less just community. It calls for Government responsiveness to an informed debate to ensure outcomes that are in the best interests of Victoria.

[Click here](#) for 'Assessing cost-effectiveness in building a safer Victoria', a paper prepared for Catholic Social Services Victoria by Gavin Kempen. CSSV has provided this paper to the Victorian Government, and has advocated that the Government undertake an inquiry into the benefits and costs of alternative approaches to crime prevention and rehabilitation, in order to underpin sustainable, long-term improvements in the safety of society and individuals within it. As the paper highlights, this is particularly important in light of the current \$10 billion annual cost of crime to Victorians.

## National Disability Insurance Scheme

A recent meeting of our **disability service provider members** explored some of the dimensions of the NDIS, and particularly its implication for service providers. These implications will be significant, as client-directed funding moves to new levels. This approach to the funding of service provision will also have implications for many other CSSV members.

One implication of these changes is that the mission-inspired aspect of our organisations and carers will come more to the fore – we would expect that the impact of our mission and our inspiration on what we do and how we do it would impact on our clients and their perception of our services.

Follow up work on these issues is planned. Enquiries to [Denis Fitzgerald](#).

Meanwhile, campaigning to ensure political support for the NDIS continues with the *NDIS Make it Real Melbourne* rally on Monday 30 April 2012 from noon at Federation Square in Melbourne. See [www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au/rally](http://www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au/rally) for more details.



[www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au](http://www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au)

## Advocacy for wage justice for low income Australians

CSSV has again worked with Brian Lawrence of the Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations to assist their advocacy for, among other things, a minimum wage that would, with transfer payments and benefits, provide an adequate income for a family of four.

[Click here](#) for the ACCER submission to the 2012 Annual Wage Review before the Fair Work Australia Minimum Wages Panel.

## Mission Network

Our **Mission network** had its first 2012 meeting on Thursday 8 March. Part of the focus at the meeting was on an outcome from the earlier NDIS meeting: that if the service we provide is not qualitatively different to that of for-profit providers, then Catholic providers will be hard pressed to survive in the more market-driven environment that the NDIS foresees.

The Network meets next on Thursday 10 May. Enquiries to [Denis Fitzgerald](#).



## Coming Events at Catholic Social Services Victoria

For bookings or further information, contact Lucia, [lbrick@css.org.au](mailto:lbrick@css.org.au), tel 9287 5566.

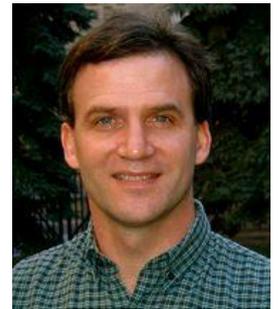
Workshop on **Induction for Mission** - Monday 16 April, 1.30 – 5.00pm. A workshop to explore sound practice in mission-related aspects of induction and orientation in Catholic social services.



Workshop on **Fundraising** - Monday 30 April

**Focus on Mental Health**, a series of three morning seminars for staff and managers in community services. 8 May, 26 June and 31 July

Forum on **Asylum Seeker Settlement** - Friday 11 May, 9.00am – 3.00pm.  
(Pictured: Fr Daniel G Groody csc, a keynote speaker at the 11 May forum.)



Breakfast Briefing, Tuesday 17 July: **Understanding the use of social media** to solve personal problems, with Professor Ruth Webber of Australian Catholic University.

2012 **CSSV Annual Dinner** – Friday 24 August

## Sector Developments and Events

### New Church leaders appointed

Congratulations to Bishop Les Tomlinson (pictured) on his appointment as Bishop of Sandhurst (Bendigo), and to Archbishop Tim Costelloe on his appointment to lead the Perth Archdiocese.

Bishop Les was a strong supporter of Catholic Social Services Victoria during his term as Vicar General in the Melbourne Archdiocese, and we warmly welcome him to his new role in Sandhurst. CentreCare Sandhurst has been part of Bishop Les' early consultations in the Diocese. Those working in the north-east of Victoria look forward to engaging with him there in their shared mission.



Photo by John Casamento



Following Bishop Les' departure, Monsignor Greg Bennett (pictured left) was appointed as Vicar General in Melbourne. Monsignor Greg has served in parish ministry as well as leading Archdiocesan-wide programs, and is warmly welcomed to his new role.

Photo by Fiona Basile Kairos/Catholic Journal

Archbishop Tim Costelloe also served in the Melbourne Archdiocese prior to his recent appointment. He visited a number of CSSV member agencies, and had a strong pastoral outlook. Our loss is Perth's gain.



## Vale Sr Maria Cunningham, RSC

Sr Maria Cunningham, a Sister of Charity, a leader in Catholic health care, and a great contributor to the social services sector, died in Melbourne on Tuesday 13 March. After service as a nurse, Sr Maria went on to serve in a range of senior roles, including chair of the Sisters of Charity Health Services and Chief Executive of the Sydney Region Sisters of Charity Hospitals. She served on the board of the National Health Insurance Commission. Among the honours she received for this work was the medal of the Order of Australia

One of Maria's recent contributions was in the establishment of Blake Cottage in Castlemaine, which offered accommodation to families which were visiting inmates of the two prisons in the vicinity. It was a ministry which she told people was the most satisfying of her career. May Maria rest in peace, and her example of faith-inspired service and humility continue to bear fruit.

## News and research service from Catholic Social Services Australia



Some readers would be aware that CSSA publishes on a daily basis a news digest that also provides analysis and further background on key current issues. Click <http://cssanewsclips.wordpress.com/> to sample this service, and to subscribe.

### Catholic Social Teaching Update

Catholic Social Teaching is the teaching of the Church on social issues. It is grounded in the Gospel and has built up over the years through reflection on service and work for justice, and through critique of societies and structures. It underpins the mission of Catholic Social Services Victoria and our members. Resources and reflections on Catholic Social Teaching abound.

Our resource update this edition is on-line course material available on-line from the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA. <http://ocw.nd.edu/theology/catholic-social-teaching>. Lectures include 'Justice and Right Reason', 'Christianity in a consumer society', and 'from Charity to Justice'.

[Denis](#) or [Terry](#) would be happy to discuss any aspect of this, including opportunities for engagement by staff etc.

### Victorian Bishops' Statement on Marriage

[Click here](#) for the recent pastoral letter from the Victorian Bishops on the nature of marriage, and urging opposition to Federal legislation that would change the definition of marriage.

**Vinnies Social Justice in the City, 12.00pm, Wednesday 30 May, St Francis' Church annex**  
Sr Margaret Mary Flynn IBVM, Australian Leader of the Loreto Sisters and 2010 NSW Business Woman of the Year will be presenting on her work in rural areas with disadvantaged women and the networks and opportunities established for employment.

### CatholicCare's Heavenly Gala Ball, 24 May 2012

[Click here](#) for information and bookings.

### Communities in Control Conference, 28, 29 May

[Click here](#) for brochure and details of this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary 'Festival of Thinking, Inspiration and Ideas', on the theme of *Community Groups at the Crossroads*.





**Vinnies CEO Sleepout, 12 June 2012**

[Click here](#) for information, or to register for this annual fundraising and awareness raising event.. (You can also sponsor Denis Fitzgerald, who is participating again in 2012. To do this, please visit <https://www.ceosleepout.org.au/donate/online-donation/> - note that, in the section labelled 'donate to', you need to click 'CEO', and then choose 'Victoria', and then choose 'Denis Fitzgerald'. )

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