

mini MICAH

monthly update for members and friends of Catholic Social Services Victoria

October 2008

Hello, and welcome to *mini MICAH*.

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■ Who am I? - Brian Crockett, Chair of Centacare Gippsland

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Recent CSSV News & Developments

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📎 **'Breakfast Conversations' Wednesday, 29th October**

We are hosting a Breakfast Conversations get-together for all those interested from the social services sector on Wednesday, 29th October, 7.30am – 8.45am, with our guest speaker, **Michael Perusco**, CEO, Sacred Heart Mission. The topic is **Social Inclusion**; the venue is the Lansdowne Room at the Cardinal Knox Centre, 383 Albert St, East Melbourne; cost of \$10 for a finger food breakfast. Please RSVP by Friday, 23rd October.

📎 **Fundraising forum:**..a meeting of interested members has been organised for Thursday 23rd October to focus on fundraising, at East Melbourne, from 9.00am – midday. This is an opportunity

to share with more experienced and successful fundraisers on the fundraising strategies and options that might be adopted. Please contact us on 9287 5566 or office@css.org.au if you wish to attend.

📎 Religious Orders : Impact of their Charism on Catholic Social Service Agencies

As part of his role on the CSSV Council, Br Doug Walsh is visiting those member agencies that have been auspiced or established by Religious Orders to explore how the particular charism of the order has impacted on the agency. Following on from this will be recommendations on what steps might be taken to optimize the impact of the charism on agencies and programs, and on keeping the Catholic identity alive in Catholic social service agencies in Victoria – we expect that there will be learnings for all out of what other agencies are doing. Doug is particularly interested at this stage in making contact with members of Religious Orders who are working in agencies. Doug can be contacted via Chris Wade on 9287 5566 or office@css.org.au.

📎 CSSV Council

The CSSV Council consists of 13 members, seven of them elected by members, and the remainder appointed. The Chair is Peter Bearsley, well known for long term involvement in governance in the social services area. Council members are listed at <http://www.css.org.au/council.html>. The Episcopal Vicar for Justice and Social Services in the Melbourne Archdiocese, Bishop Christopher Prowse, is an ex officio member of Council - <http://www.melbourne.catholic.org.au/bishops/bishopprorowse.htm>. The Council meets six-weekly – its next meeting is on 31 October 2008, in Ballarat.

📎 Recent CSSV advocacy work has included:

Participation in Inter-Church Gambling Taskforce presentation to the Senate Community Affairs Committee hearings on electronic gaming. The thrust of CSSV's contribution is that, at a state level, the pain of problem gambling is disproportionately borne by people in poorer areas of Victoria, and that State Government dependence on gambling revenue remains a barrier to long term reform. Specific measures to make electronic gaming machines less addictive, and to restrict runs of losses, were supported.

Abortion: on 4 September CSSV wrote to members of the Victorian Parliament opposing the Abortion Law Reform Bill 2008 - see <http://www.css.org.au/news.html>. As well as the general issues of support for women and respect for all human life, there are several linkages to CSSV. Some provisions of the Bill, relating to referral requirements on registered psychologists, have an immediate effect on some member agencies. The sector has involvement in pregnancy support, and a keen interest in an adequate social and economic safety net, which are relevant to the debate. Post-abortion counselling is another area that agencies have an interest in.

This Bill is to be debated next week in the Legislative Council, where the vote is expected to be close. In the run up to that debate, the Bishops of Victoria have urged that letters continue to be written to local members of the Council. The Archbishop of Melbourne has also issued a general invitation to an hour of prayer at St Patrick's Cathedral at 12.15pm on Sunday 5 October, and the Australian Catholic University has organised a forum on conscientious objection at Fitzroy on Monday 6 October at 5.00pm – see <http://www.melbourne.catholic.org.au/>

📎 Work still in progress includes:

Human Rights Charter – we are still developing a paper on the operations of the Charter, and the opportunities and issues that it raises for CSSV members.

2009 Victorian Budget – our submission is still under development. Your input would be welcome – please contact Denis with general or specific items you would like taken into consideration.

📎 CSSV's loss is Shekinah Homeless Services' gain

Margaret Casey has been farewelled by CSSV and all at the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. However, Marg is not lost to the sector, having joined Shekinah Homeless Services as Volunteer Coordinator. We wish Marg and Shekinah all the best and know that she will give all her energy, enthusiasm to the job and her special sense of fun and joy to all with whom she comes in contact.

📎 Rerum Novarum lecture 2008

Ms Claudette Werleigh, General Secretary of the international Catholic peace organisation Pax Christi, and former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Haiti, delivered the 2009 Rerum Novarum lecture on 23 September. The title of the lecture was *"Peace Building Initiatives in Africa"*. The lecture is organised annually by the Office for Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Ms Werleigh spoke eloquently about the importance of peacemaking at the local level – engaging with Governments, holding international companies accountable, involving women at all stages. The leading role played by African-Australians in the discussion from the floor following the lecture highlighted a change in the nature of Australian society, and in the sophistication of our collective engagement on African issues.

📎 Statewide Social Services Research and Policy Network

Livia Carusi and her colleagues at [St Vincent de Paul Aged Care and Community Services](#) have reconvened regular meetings of researchers and policy analysts in social service agencies in Victoria. At a meeting at CSSV on 10 September, Guy Johnson, a homelessness researcher and joint author of 'On the Outside, Pathways in and out of Homelessness' challenged all of us to utilize more effectively linkages between advocacy and research. Contact Livia about involvement: livia.carusi@svdp-vic.org.au

📎 McAuley Community Services for Women

CSSV's newest member is McCauley Community Services for Women, which opened its doors have recently joined as members of CSSV. McCauley is the newly-formed amalgamation of Mercy Care and Regina Coeli, with Jocelyn Bignold as CEO of the new organisation. jbignold@mcauleycsw.org.au

📎 Catholic Social Services Australia – Advocacy activity

CSSA has been particularly active in advocacy over recent months, as indicated by the following media releases. Mini-Micah readers can follow up on these issues through CSSV or direct to CSSA in Canberra.

24/09/2008 [Harsh Compliance Measures Fall Short of Necessary Reforms](#)

22/09/2008 [Don't Play Politics With Pensions](#)

09/09/2008 [National Child Protection Week: Children See Children Do](#)

16/07/2008 [Carbon Poverty On Government's Agenda](#)

11/07/2008 [Fair Pay Commission Decision Takes Away Tax Cuts and Overlooks the Plight of Low Paid Working Families](#)

26/06/2008 [CSSA Welcomes Quick Action on Family Tax Benefits for Charity Workers](#)

📎 2008 Social Justice Statement

As credit markets continue to dry up and stock prices (and the value of superannuation funds) continue to fall, it can be very tempting for a society to lose focus on its most vulnerable members.

"A Rich Young Nation: The challenge of affluence and poverty in Australia", is an antidote to that temptation. This document, the 2008 Social Justice Sunday Statement, was issued by the Australian Bishops Conference in September – a copy is available at <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/> The Statement reflects on the wealth of our society, and on the circumstances of vulnerable Australians who have been denied a fair share of the prosperity flowing from nearly two decades of economic growth – the homeless, indigenous Australians, many of those with mental illness, etc. It also reflects on spiritual poverty in the midst of plenty. Recommended reading!

📎 Resources – News and commentary

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council produces a monthly briefing on social justice issues – the September 2008 briefing is now available online, and provision can be made for email receipt of each edition: <http://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/briefing>

Eureka Street - www.eurekastreet.com.au – is a Jesuit-sponsored Australian on-line magazine that ‘focuses unwaveringly on the human dimensions of individual, communal, political and international situations’. It is available via daily or weekly emails – these are free, but donations are welcomed.

Media coverage

The following media coverage of CSSV members can be viewed at <http://www.css.org.au/news.html> :

- The Age on 29 September published a feature from Michael Perusco from Sacred Heart Mission on homelessness and the need for additional public housing
- on 19 September the Herald Sun ran a feature on the prison chaplaincy work of Fr Joe Caddy from Centacare Catholic Family Services

For your diary

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Hour of Prayer – Abortion Law Reform Bill

12.15pm on Sunday 5 October, at St Patrick’s Cathedral

The Archbishop of Melbourne has called a Day of Intercession throughout the Archdiocese on 5 October 2008 dedicated to the defeat of the Abortion Law Reform Bill. He has invited all people of good will to join with him in an hour of prayer at St Patrick’s Cathedral at 12.15pm on that day.

Forum on conscientious objection

Monday 6 October at 5.00pm

Mercy Lecture Theatre, Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Pde, Fitzroy

Speakers: Fr Frank Brennan SJ, Dr Helen McCabe, Dr Nicholas Tonti-Filippini

‘Breakfast Conversations’, featuring Michael Perusco on Social Inclusion

Wednesday, 29th October, 7.30 – 8.45am, Cardinal Knox Centre

\$10 for a finger food breakfast. Please RSVP by Friday, 23rd October.

Fundraising forum:. To discuss issues and ask questions of some experienced players

Thursday 23rd October, at East Melbourne, from 9.00am – midday.

Please contact us on 9287 5566 or office@css.org.au if you wish to attend.

2009 Commissioning Mass, CSSV Annual General Meeting, and meal

Thursday 12 March, 2009, 4.30 – 7.00pm

For staff, leaders, volunteers and friends of CSSV members

2009 CSSV Dinner

Feedback from our August 2008 Annual Dinner has been very positive - the atmosphere was great, and it was seen as a great place to meet people. Thanks to all who participated or contributed – see <http://www.css.org.au/news.html> for some photos. Planning for 2009 is underway – details to be advised. The aim remains to make it an occasion for acknowledging the contribution of our sector, and fostering linkages across the sector.

Who am I?

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Each issue, we profile someone in the CSSV community. In this issue, we hear from Brian Crockett from Centacare Gippsland.

Q: Tell us about where you work and your role.

I work in the Marriage Tribunal of the Catholic Church, for Victoria & Tasmania, at the Cardinal Knox Centre, East Melbourne.

Q: Tell us something interesting or funny that has happened at your work recently?

Recently when interviewing at St Mary's Parish Centre, Geelong, I locked myself out of the Interview Room and had to exit the building by another door and re-enter the Centre via the front door. I felt quite foolish asking to be readmitted!

Q: Have you a piece of advice or encouragement that has helped you in your life or work?

Try not to take oneself too seriously. Also, to be half as good as you expect the other person to be can be a big help in life and work.

Q: What do you do to wind down or relax?

Read Morris West novels (I have them all) and books on politicians' lives and also trains. I enjoy a chardy after a hard day at the office.

Q: Have you a particular role model?

Nobody in particular, but in my younger days I had some very good men as football coaches who taught me good lifestyle attitudes. Generally I am impressed by people who show respect and dignity towards others.

Q: Which footy team do you support and why?

MELBOURNE - I have been a Demon fan since 1947 and never likely to change!

Send us your news –information on what your agency is achieving will be appreciated.

Contact us

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mini MICAH thrives on news! Send your news, updates, and any items of interest to miniMICAH@css.org.au.

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