



## mini MICAH – April 2009

*monthly update for members and friends of Catholic Social Services Victoria*

### Easter greetings to all our readers:

**As we re-live Christ's victory of life over suffering and death, may we taste the joy of Easter with our loved ones; and may we be inspired in our work by the hope and promise of a world made new.**

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### CSSV News & Developments

#### 📄 2009 Commissioning Mass and Annual General Meeting

Thanks to all CSSV members and friends who were able to join us to make our Commissioning Mass and Annual General Meeting on 12 March such a positive evening - it was good to gather as a community to celebrate our work, to pray together in solidarity with those we serve, and to reflect on the issues that we face in building a more just and compassionate society.

Our **annual report** is now on the website - <http://www.css.org.au/annualreports.html> - as is our **Constitution**, updated to reflect changes agreed at the AGM - <http://www.css.org.au/mission.html>

**Council elections:** Congratulations, and thanks, to Peter Bearsley, reelected for another 12 month term as Chair of the CSSV Council, and to Carol Vale and Johanna Snelleman, who were reelected to a further two year term. Congratulations and welcome to Janis Klavins, Deputy CEO of Villa Maria, who was elected to a two year term, and thanks and best wishes to Helen McPhee, who finished up after a much appreciated contribution as a member of Council over recent years.

**Our AGM guest speaker was Teresa Wilson**, Director, Office of Youth in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, and National Youth Representative, St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia. Teresa spoke on the topic: *“Engaging young people in service and justice agencies”*. Teresa challenged all of us to ensure that our organisations are well positioned to engage effectively with people of all ages, which usually requires that we change in some ways. A copy of her paper is available on our website - <http://www.css.org.au/papers.html>

#### **Helping those affected by Victorian bushfires**

In consultation with a range of Catholic social service agencies, CSSV arranged for Ms Janet Cribbes to undertake a ‘rapid assessment’ of gaps in services to bushfire affected areas, and to develop a program of support that will enable local communities to draw on the expertise of agencies to make a difference in the short term and the longer term. Our aim is to work with parishes and communities over the long term, to help build communities that are even stronger than they were before the fires.

A three year program of support was subsequently supported financially by the Archbishop’s Bushfire Appeal Fund, and project activation is now commencing, with Centacare Catholic Family Services as the lead agency. A parallel project is underway in the Gippsland area. Enquiries etc to Denis Fitzgerald would be welcome.

#### **Melbourne Seminars on Catholic identity in health, education and welfare delivery**

A series of three seminars was held during March, organised by CSSV, under the auspices of Bishop Christopher Prowse, the Episcopal Vicar for Justice and Social Services. Around 50 leaders from the Archdiocese of Melbourne and key personnel from our health, welfare and education agencies participated in each seminar.

The seminars generated informative and stimulating discussion papers. Summary reports are available on website - <http://www.css.org.au/papers.html>. Individual papers are available on request, and a publication is planned.

Some follow-up is planned, including implications of a Catholic identity for recruitment, induction and formation implications – details to follow.

#### **Pastoral services in Aged Care.**

A number of members, particularly in the aged care sector, have raised questions about the pastoral care of both residents and staff. A discussion forum for interested members is being planned to reflect on the issues facing agencies, and consider models and training resources that are available. Current planning is for a forum on 30 April. Arrangements are almost finalised, with the Forum to be held in the **Treacy Room at The Thomas Carr Centre**, 278 Victoria Pd East Melbourne from 10.00 am till 2.00pm. Program details will go out next week to relevant members and organisations. Terry O’Shannassy would be happy to discuss any aspect of this, and will be in further contact with relevant members soon.

#### **Advocacy update**

##### **Youth in Out of Home care.**

In support of the urgent need for a better response by Government and the community as a whole to the needs of these vulnerable young people and children, CSSV wrote in March to the Minister for Community Services, outlining our concerns and supporting the thrust of the recent media campaign. A media release last week stressed the urgency of action on this issue – recent major problems are symptomatic of a system that is underresourced and under strain: <http://www.css.org.au/news.html>

##### **Victorian budget**

Finalisation of the budget would now be underway within the Government, for release on 5 May 2009. Indications for some time have been that the budget will be ‘tight’. CSSV has therefore written to Ministers adding our voice to the importance of keeping a focus on the needs of those groups in our society who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, notwithstanding the other pressures that the Government is facing.

We recently wrote to senior ministers stressing the importance of adequately funding community service agencies for those programs that are delivered and funded under contract with the Victorian Government.

### **Problem Gambling**

As an active member of the Inter-Church Problem Gambling Taskforce, CSSV has welcomed a recent announcement by the Victorian Government on the banning of Automatic Teller Machines from poker machine venues. We have also been actively involved in discussions with members of Parliament on elements of the current Bill that would provide poker machine licences to hotels and clubs, rather than the current arrangements where all licences are held by Tattersalls or Tabcorp. Our goal in all of this is to minimise the risk and the impact of problem gambling.

### **Farewell to Chris Wade**

You are invited to join us in farewelling Chris on Friday 24 April at 4.00pm in the staff room, Cardinal Knox Centre (where the CSSV office is located). RSVP [admin@css.org.au](mailto:admin@css.org.au)

## **Around the Sector**

[Do you have an event that CSSV could highlight?]

### **St Mary's House of Welcome returning home**

After 12 months, St Mary's House of Welcome staff and residents have returned to their newly-renovated building at 165 Brunswick St, Fitzroy. Premier John Brumby and Minister for Housing and local member Richard Wynne attended the opening, with the Premier speaking glowingly about the value of the work begun 50 years ago by the Daughters of Charity. CSSV congratulates all those who have been associated with the re-development, and we wish them well as they continue to provide an inclusive community for many in the inner city area who are homeless or disadvantaged.

### **Senate Enquiry visits Corpus Christi Community, Greenvale**

The Chair of the Senate Inquiry into residential and community aged care last week visited Corpus Christi Community, Greenvale, a Catholic aged care facility that looks after homeless alcoholic men in Melbourne. Senator Helen Polley toured the 92-bed facility and spoke with its Community Director, Patrick Gallagher, after Catholic Health Australia issued her an invitation during testimony at a hearing in Canberra earlier this month.

"We took her around and showed her what we do, and I think she went away with a much clearer idea of what we do," Mr Gallagher said. "One of our concerns with the Aged Care Funding Instrument is that it will force us to become much more discriminating about the people who we take on; Senator Polley was very open to listening to our concerns."

### **L'Arche community**

CSSV have followed with interest the launch of the L'Arche community in Black Rock. A recent prayer reflection evening enabled us to meet many of the participants board members and supporters. Founded by the renowned Canadian theologian and writer, Jean Vanier, L'Arche communities provide a shared supportive community, some of whose members have disabilities. The Archdiocese has supported the establishment of L'Arche in Melbourne. Terry O'Shannassy at CSSV can provide further information.

### **Jesuit Social Services Annual Dinner**

The 28 March 2009 annual JSS fundraising dinner was, again, a success. Speaker Waleed Ali complemented the other formal and entertaining presentations with his thoughts on the importance of inviting every person, and every group, to participate in building our society.

[Do you have an event that CSSV could highlight?]

### **2009 Anti Poverty Week**

October 11 – 17 is Anti-Poverty week, a series of events designed to raise awareness in the community of poverty and of what can be done to reduce levels of poverty in Australia and beyond. CSSV is a member of the Victorian Facilitating Group.

All member agencies, or individual programs, etc, are urged to develop some 'event' for that week to focus on poverty issues. This could involve 'badging' a regular morning tea, etc; or something more ambitious. Recording that event on the anti-poverty week website - [www.helps.org.au](http://www.helps.org.au) - helps give the whole initiative publicity and momentum. Denis Fitzgerald can provide more information.

### 🔒 **Employment services tenders**

Congratulations to those member agencies that were successful in tendering for Commonwealth-funded employment tenders for the period commencing 1 July 2009.

Our thoughts are with the staff of those programs around the sector that will not be funded beyond June, as we thank them for their contribution to the marginalised employment seekers that Catholic Social Service agencies have been working with in recent years. We also join national bodies in reflecting on the policy sense in the approach to the tenders that was adopted by the Government – as Michael Perusco from Sacred Heart Mission eloquently put it in “The Age” 12 months ago “To make a social inclusion strategy work, it requires determination and funding – neither of which appears to be present in the new employment services framework.”

### For your diary

- 🔒 **Friday 24 April: Farewell to Chris Wade.** 4.00pm in the staff room, Cardinal Knox Centre (where the CSSV office is located). RSVP [admin@css.org.au](mailto:admin@css.org.au)
- 🔒 **Thurs 30 April, forum on pastoral services in aged care.** Forum to be held in the **Treacy Room at The Thomas Carr Centre**, 278 Victoria Pd East Melbourne from 10.00 am till 2.00pm Program details will go out next week to relevant members and organisations. Contact Terry O’Shannassy for information etc.
- 🔒 **National Forum: A New Era For Social Housing**, Sydney, April 22  
On 22 April, St Vincent de Paul, Catholic Health Australia, and Catholic Social Services are hosting a forum in Sydney to give answers on how to access government support for new social housing initiatives. Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek, Prof Julian Disney and many other expert speakers will attend the forum. The invitation, agenda and registration form are available [here](#).
- 🔒 **2009 CSSV Dinner**  
Friday, 28 August 2009, San Remo Ballroom. All welcome. This event is aimed at organisational leaders, including Board members, and other friends of the sector. Please start thinking now about putting together a table from your organisation.
- 🔒 **2009 Anti Poverty Week**  
11 – 17 October 2009 – schedule your anti-poverty week event.

### Contact us

*mini MICAH* thrives on news! Send your news, updates, and any items of interest to [office@css.org.au](mailto:office@css.org.au).

Please also let us know of any events, celebrations etc in your agency or program – we are keen to keep in touch with developments, and to assist with publicity etc where that is appropriate.

#### Catholic Social Services Victoria

383 Albert St (PO Box 146) East Melbourne Vic 3002 03 9287 5566 [www.css.org.au](http://www.css.org.au)

<p><i>Denis Fitzgerald</i> Executive Director <a href="mailto:dfitzgerald@css.org.au">dfitzgerald@css.org.au</a> 9287 5569</p>	<p><i>Terry O’Shannassy</i> Member Support and Projects <a href="mailto:toshannassy@css.org.au">toshannassy@css.org.au</a> 9287 5570</p>	<p><i>Christine Wade</i> Office Administrator <a href="mailto:cwade@css.org.au">cwade@css.org.au</a> 9287 5566</p>
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