



mini MICAH – June 2009

monthly update for members and friends of Catholic Social Services Victoria

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For your diary.

- ✚ Wed 22 July 2009, 7.30 – 8.45am
383 Albert St, East Melbourne
CSSV Breakfast Briefing
Speaker: Janet Cribbes,
Project Coordinator for the Bushfire Community Response at Centacare
Topic: **Post bushfire reconstruction & community rebuilding**
RSVP by Thursday 16 July to Emmy Silvius, tel 9287 5566, esilvius@css.org.au
- ✚ Thurs 10 September, 2009, 7.30 – 8.45am
Next **CSSV Breakfast Briefing**
Speaker - tba
- ✚ Fri 28 August, 2009 **CSSV Annual Dinner**
at San Remo Ballroom, Nth Carlton
After Dinner Speaker: Julian McMahon, barrister and human rights advocate
Enquiries to Emmy Silvius, tel 9287 5566, esilvius@css.org.au
- ✚ 11 – 17 October, 2009 - **Anti-Poverty week**
Organise your event for the week, and record it on
www.antipovertyweek.org.au to help give the Anti Poverty initiative publicity
and momentum



Who am I?

- ✚ Janet Cribbes, Project Coordinator for the Bushfire Community Response at Centacare

CSSV News & Developments

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📎 **Contribution of Church service providers**

During a recent informal discussion on the proposal by the Federal Government to introduce a 'compact' between the Government and the not-for-profit sector, the issue arose as to what distinctive contribution major Church providers could contribute to consultation on this issue. Participating in that discussion were major service providers, as well as representatives from the political and departmental arms of Government.



The short answer that emerged was that we value the inherent dignity of each person, and that this informs our service delivery and our advocacy. For example, we maintain that assistance programs to build dignity and participation should be in place for those who aren't likely to be able to hold down a job, as well as others who are unemployed. Complementary to this is that, as organisations, we proclaim our independence, and our right to critique policy, and not to act solely as a delivery of Government-funded programs.

We aren't the only agencies that proclaim these values, and these are not the only strengths and values we bring to the table. They are noted here, though, because, as the participants in that discussion also noted, we often don't articulate such matters in dialogue outside our own sector.

Breakfast Briefing – 27 May 2009 - discussion of Federal Government directions

CSSV hosted a Breakfast Briefing on 27 May 09 for around 20 members and friends, featuring input from Frank Quinlan, Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia, on the recent Federal budget and related matters. The session went very well, with good engagement across the room.



Frank presented an interpretative interesting overview of the political setting of the budget:

- pension increases are welcomed, but the strong political campaign that preceded this increase is also noted
- 'social inclusion' was not to the fore in the budget, and workforce participation seems to be the guiding principle behind holding Newstart payments at their current low level
- We can expect continued pressure on the not-for-profit sector, with a trend towards competitive tendering, and towards a mix of fewer, larger providers, plus niche providers that are specialists in particular areas.

Discussion was keen, covering, among other things, the need for the Catholic social services sector and those we work with to build up data to support policy positions, and for sustained media coverage in support of political objectives, including increased Newstart allowance payments.

The theme of the future shape of the sector was also strong in a subsequent workshop led by Frank Quinlan, on contracting with Government. There is anecdotal evidence that larger organizations tend to prevail in gaining Government funding; but there are also continued opportunities for specialist, niche providers of services. The implications for Catholic social service agencies are profound: we need to harvest economies of scale, and to stand out in the areas that we choose to focus on. This indicates a need for continued dialogue on these issues among stakeholders in Catholic social services sector; and for concerted efforts to promote cooperation between agencies, particularly in relation to increasing efficiency through shared support services. Both CSSA and CSSV have a role to play in this. Please feel free to contact Denis Fitzgerald (dfitzgerald@css.org.au, 9287 5569) for further information on this workshop.

Meeting Point Roundtable – the linkages between education and welfare

Meeting point is a coalition of advocates interested in fostering effective cooperation between the Catholic education and welfare systems to maximise the educational outcomes for children from low socio-economic backgrounds. CSSV is part of the coalition. A Meeting Point Roundtable met on May 5th to gather ideas around inclusion Issues in Catholic schools particularly related to financial constraints that may lead eventually to reduced educational outcomes. About 30 representatives from the education and welfare sector heard Professor Richard Teese reflect on what he termed 'the density of disadvantage'. He claimed that the education levels of parents effect the development of their children, saying, "disadvantage remains for a long time". Marilyn Webster from Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services listed the 'cascading impacts' of poverty on school outcomes;

- low participation in pre-school
- low literacy levels



- retention issues
- non-completion of Y12
- employment difficulties.

Led by Chair Michael Gourlay of Jesuit Social Services, a range of proposals for further development emerged, some of them achievable in the short term, such as encouraging the inclusion of costs for excursions etc within a total fee, thus minimising the possibility of children not participating because of family circumstances.

Terry O'Shannassy would be happy to provide further details – terry.oshannassy@css.org.au, tel 9287 5570.

Jeanne Jugan Aged Care Group

Following the decision of the recent CSSV Aged Care forum to maintain an ongoing identity, the Little Sisters of The Poor and Archbishop Hart have agreed to name this loose grouping after the founder of the Little Sisters, Blessed Jeanne Jugan, who will be canonized in October. We are thus pleased to announce the formation of The Jeanne Jugan Aged Care Group as the conduit for ongoing contact with member providers and others. CSSV will manage the contact and will keep the sector informed of relevant activities, in-service opportunities, current publications and coming events. An embryonic web presence is at <http://www.css.org.au/agedcarelinks.html>. Contributions and ideas from members would be welcome, and we envisage planning occasional group gatherings as needs dictate.

Other follow up to date has included a report which will soon go to participants. Another is that Terry O'Shannassy spoke recently to the regular Catholic Health Care Chaplains meeting, reporting on the discussions and outlining issues. The group had significant interest in the developments and boundless energy for their ministry. As a member agency they will play a key role in keeping us informed on issues from the chaplains' perspective.

CSSV Council

The CSSV Council and its Research, Policy and Advocacy Committee met on May 22. Among other things:

-  Pregnancy Assistance Frankston was formally admitted to membership of CSSV
-  CSSV's workplan was reviewed, and further prioritisation called for
-  Fr Joe Caddy, CEO of Centacare Catholic Family Services, was appointed Chair of the Research, Policy and Advocacy Committee. Policy personnel from within the network will be invited to join the Committee.
-  The next meeting of the Council is on 3 July 2009.

Denis Fitzgerald – dfitzgerald@css.org.au, tel 9287 5569 – would be happy to provide further information on any of these matters.

Victorian Gambling Legislation

On 4 June, the Victorian Legislative Council passed the Gambling Regulation (Amendment) Licensing Bill, which restructures poker machine holdings away from the Tabcorp/Tattersalls duopoly, and distributes machines to clubs and pubs. The main additional consumer protection measures associated with the Bill is the ability for gamblers to set a limit to their losses that, if exceeded, will lock them out of machines for a fixed time. There is also a ban on Automatic Teller Machines within gambling venues. As part of the InterChurch Gambling Taskforce, CSSV has welcomed these additional protection measures, although we would prefer they be implemented sooner than currently provided for.

There remains, however, much to be done to reduce problem gambling levels. Additional concessions to Crown Casino are not helpful in this regard, nor is the fact that the Victorian Government remains reliant on Electronic Gaming Machines for \$1 billion in annual revenue. There are reports that such issues are not on the political agenda in NSW because, although problem gambling adversely affects many in the community there, the pokies have been around for so long that there is a much reduced constituency for change. This cannot be allowed to happen in Victoria.



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[www.realpressie.org.au](#)

This innovative website, an initiative of MacKillop Family Services, provides a mechanism to focus life celebrations – birthdays, anniversaries, baptism, etc – on the needs of children who are vulnerable and in need of assistance. “We give an opportunity for you to create a celebration website page, where your guests can leave you messages of support, and make donations to the Kids at MacKillop instead of giving you gifts”, advises a recent newsletter.



[Reconciliation Victoria](#)

Vicki Walker, co-chair of Reconciliation Victoria (and Coordinator of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry) has led opposition to the de-funding by the Victorian Government of Reconciliation Victoria, which has promoted reconciliation and racism in schools, businesses, councils and community groups over the past seven years. On behalf of the organisation, Vicki has also rejected interim funding of \$100,000 from the Aboriginal Affairs budget that would have kept Reconciliation Victoria going until it merged with Reconciliation Victoria in 2011 – she sees that budget as being for indigenous groups, whereas Reconciliation Victoria is for the community as a whole. The cause of reconciliation remains central to the building of a more just society, and Governments at all levels must continue to be part of the way forward. CSSV has asked the Victorian Government to reconsider its defunding decision, in the interests of reconciliation, and thus of the wellbeing of the whole Victorian community.

Vicki asks that we pass on that Reconciliation Victoria is “calling on all supporters to be part of a silent vigil outside the State ALP Conference on Saturday, 13 June at the Melbourne Town Hall, Cnr Swanston and Collins Streets, from 7.30am - 10am. Please come wearing black and feel free to bring a poster as a measure of your concern. We want to do a dignified protest, particularly as ALP delegates arrive.”

[Congratulations to Br Doug Walsh OAM](#)

Congratulations to Marist Brother Doug Walsh, who was honoured with the Medal of the Order of Australia in the recent Queen’s Birthday honours list. The award citation was ‘for services to the community through the St Vincent de Paul Society’, where Doug is involved in the Melbourne conference and in coordinating soup van operations. Doug’s contribution to people who are marginalised in our society, however, goes well beyond that: it includes a sustained commitment to disadvantaged young people through the establishment of the Doxa schools; as well as service on the Council of CSSV as the nominee of the Leaders of Religious Congregations. In responding to offers of congratulations, Doug has stressed that he is grateful for the many people who have assisted him in his endeavours – their love and compassion for the poor have always inspired him.

Congratulations also to CSSA Board Member and ANU Professor of Political Science John Warhurst. John was also honoured, with appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia.

[Portability of Long Service Leave](#)

VCOSS continues to lead discussions with the Victorian Government over a proposal to enable employees in the community welfare sector to transfer long service leave entitlements when they change employment between agencies in the sector. This has long been supported in principle by VCOSS and others as a way of making employment in the sector more attractive, thus benefitting staff and agencies. In the short term, however, there is a range of practical issues that would need to be resolved. CSSV is engaging in these discussions, and will report separately to members soon. Denis Fitzgerald would be happy to discuss with anyone who is interested – dfitzgerald@css.org.au, tel 9287 5569.



Successful exhibition of prisoners' art

Congratulations to Sr. Mary O'Shannassy and her prison ministry chaplaincy team on the successful exhibition of art work from prison inmates that was displayed last month at Mary of the Cross Centre, Fitzroy. The various media employed and the depth of feeling evident in the work, speak volumes for the engagement of these artists with this medium, and its power to communicate across cultural and other divides.

The art pieces are now headed to Vienna, Austria to be shown as part of a UN-sponsored international exhibition of prisoners' art. Congratulations to the chaplaincy team for their persistent efforts to gain inmates greater access to educational and recreational opportunities such as this one.

Visits to welfare agencies by Catholic health leaders

The Australian Catholic University, in conjunction with Catholic Health Australia, conducted a successful Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Catholic Culture, aimed at senior staff in Catholic health agencies. Thanks to those member agencies that hosted visits by participants in this course over the last couple of weeks. The purpose was to enable health and aged care executives to come to an understanding of barriers some members of the community experience accessing health care. The visits made a profound impact on the participants as evidenced in the presentations of their reflections on the final morning of the course. This course will do much to promote closed links between the Health and Welfare sectors.

ACU has a related Graduate Certificate aimed at leaders in Catholic welfare and related agencies. Any enquires about this can be directed to Frank Stuart of ACU at frank.stuart@acu.edu.au, tel 5336 5335.

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Janet Cribbes, Project Coordinator for the Bushfire Community Response at Centacare



Q: Tell us about where you work and your role

I have been employed through Centacare as the Project Coordinator for the Bushfire Community Response. In March I conducted a 'rapid needs analysis' of the affected areas, with CSSV being the lead agency on this. A submission to the Archbishop's Appeal Fund was successful to fund a 3 year commitment to deliver services in the areas affected. This work will complement the work done by the Victorian Government's Department of Human Services and the Victorian Bushfire Recovery Authority.

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

Nothing is ever so bad if you can have a laugh some time during the day. Always take your responsibilities and work seriously but never yourself! People will forget who you are or what you are but they will always remember how you made them feel. (Someone famous said that!) I learnt sometime ago that nothing ever stays the same, whether its good or bad it too passes.

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

It almost always involves a glass of red! I love a good laugh, good comedy and "chick flicks" (as long as they are dramatic). I also enjoy reading, non fiction and books that challenge the psycho/spiritual aspects of self.

Q: Have you a particular role model?



I discovered Jung many years ago. The integration of psychology and spirituality has always fascinated me. I have been fortunate to work with women who are well grounded, compassionate, wisdom figures and successful.

Q: If there is one thing you could change in the world today what would that be?

The world is in such turmoil at present. If the separation between soul and spirit, body and soul could be bridged we would be able to walk the Christ consciousness. It would be a more humane world.

Contact us

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mini MICAH thrives on news! Send your news, updates, and any items of interest to 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

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