



mini MICAH – November 2009

Monthly update for members and friends of Catholic Social Services Victoria

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CSSV

- ✚ 1 December 2009 – **CSSV Political Forum**
- ✚ 18 December 2009 – **reporting back from CSSA Enrichment program**
- ✚ 11 March 2010, 4.30pm – **CSSV Commissioning Mass and AGM**
- ✚ 20 August 2010 – **CSSV Annual Dinner**

Other

- ✚ 23-29 November 2009 – **Social Inclusion Week**
- ✚ 29 November 2009, 11am - **Bushfire Recovery Mass**
- ✚ 3 to 9 December 2009 - **Parliament of the World's Religions**

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- ✚ **Fr Tony Kerin** – Episcopal Vicar for Justice & Social Services



CSSV News & Development

Breakfast Briefing from Child Safety Commissioner

Thank you to Bernie Geary for a challenging and engaging Breakfast briefing on 28 October on *Protecting vulnerable children in our society*. Bernie's own journey of learning and growth through solidarity with young people, and his outline of current issues, were most appreciated by the 30-plus attendees. He exhorted all of us to play our part in creating a society that values and cares for vulnerable young people – it takes a village to raise a child.

The breakfast briefing that had been flagged for mid-December will now not take place, but a program is being developed for 2010.

Aged care - Pastoral Care and formation

Congratulation to Catholic Health Australia on the recent successful forum for pastoral care leaders. A range of speakers highlighted ways in which current issues are being addressed and pointed to new opportunities that are opening up in terms of training.

In a subsequent gathering on November 11, CSSV combined with CHA to present a day for senior managers of Aged Care facilities. CHA concentrated on accreditation issues and the lead-up to the next federal election. The CSSV segment focused on the value for the sector of the canonization of St Jeanne Jugan, founder of The Little Sisters of The Poor. Sr. Winifred Sutcliff challenged the participants to consider the iconic value for the sector having a saint as a model. Julie Morris from Melbourne City Mission lead a lively session on the spiritual significance of stories in pastoral care of the aged.

Training of pastoral care workers is an issue for the sector, on which CSSV will focus further.

CSSV Political Forum - Tues 1 December 2009, 8.30 am to 1.30pm

This Forum is to enable us to interact with Government Ministers and opposition leaders on issues of interest to our sector. This will be one step in seeking to impact on the views of both sides of politics in the run-up to the next Victorian election, which is scheduled for Saturday 27 November, 2010.



The format and participation has been designed to enable participants to bring issues and relevant experiences to the attention of political representatives. These can be broader issues than those belonging to the particular portfolios of the attending ministers. The morning will involve informal mixing, short presentations, and discussion with Government people, and, separately, with Opposition representatives.

Cost per person will be \$25 (incl m/ tea and lunch). For registration purposes download our flyer at <http://www.css.org.au/documents/FlyerPoliticalForumDec09.pdf>. For further information contact Terry O'Shannassy – toshannassy@css.org.au – or Emmy Silvius – esilvius@css.org.au.

Reporting back from CSSA Enrichment program on Catholic identity: Friday 18 December, 9.15 am – 12.15pm, Cardinal Knox Centre, East Melbourne

Six Victorians participated in the September/October Enrichment program for leaders in Catholic social services that was organised by Catholic Social Services Australia. The program was very successful. Participants returned from the time in Rome and in Leuven, Belgium, renewed and refreshed in their personal faith commitment, and in their focus on service to the community as part of the Church.



Leuven





The Victorian contingent are arranging a workshop for the morning of Friday 18 December at which they can report back to the sector, and lead reflection on some of the aspects of Catholic identity that arose during the program.

The CSSV website - <http://css.org.au/papers.html> - contains some preliminary reflections on the program, its impact on participants, and some of the learnings about Catholic identity that emerged: among other things, this identity should strengthen our commitment to make a difference to the world, and particularly to those most in need.

Those leading the workshop on 18 December are Fr Joe Caddy, the leader of the program; Jenny Glare from MacKillop Family Services; Paul Fogarty, Centacare Sandhurst; Rev Jim Erskine, Diocese of Sale; and Peter Bearsley and Denis Fitzgerald from CSSV. Enquiries etc to Denis on 9287 5569 or dfitzgerald@css.org.au

Proposal for 'Best Practice Workshop' in 2010 on working with mental health issues

Mental health issues impact on nearly all of our services, including juvenile justice, prisons generally, refugee settlement, aged care, disability care, counselling. An issue in many cases is gaining access to mental health services for clients who need it. A common theme is how to skill, support and sustain a workforce in an environment where mental health impinges on and adds to pressure on all staff members.

The Research, Policy and Advocacy Committee of the CSSV Council is working towards a 'Best Practice Forum' on these issues for around March 2010. The theme will be 'Empowering organisations and their people for engagement with people suffering from mental illness.' Any comments etc at this stage would be most welcome, and could be directed to Terry at toshannassy@css.org.au

Review of Guardianship & Administration Act 1986

We are currently following the Law Reform Commission's review of the *Guardianship and Administration Act* 1986. This Act impacts on a large number of our clients across the aged care, disability and other sectors – it seeks to protect a very vulnerable section of society. Discussion with CSSV members to identify issues for the review has commenced. Members with particular interest in this issue should contact Terry O'Shannassy on 9287 5570.

Other advocacy

- **Problem gambling:** as part of the Inter-Church Gambling Taskforce, CSSV is developing a response to the recent Productivity Commission draft report on Gambling.
- **Electricity pricing:** our submissions to the Victorian Government on this support the call by the St Vincent de Paul Society and others for a pricing structure that does not place the burden of higher sector costs onto those who can least afford it.
- **Victorian Homelessness Strategy:** a sector response to the Victorian Government discussion paper is planned. We will contact members on this soon.
- **Child protection:** a report is expected soon from the Victorian Ombudsman that will address some of the problems of resourcing and some of the other issues that prevent children in out-of-home care receiving the level of support that is needed. That report will be a basis for further appeals to the Government and to the community as a whole to address our shared responsibilities to these vulnerable young people.
- **Prison issues:** the Victorian prison system is currently under strain, particularly in relation to increased numbers of women in prison. The release in December of the ABS annual review of prison numbers will provide an opportunity for CSSV to draw public and Government attention to underlying issues of mental health and lack of educational achievement, to levels of support for those in prison, and to programs ensuring effective re-integration into the community. Liaison with members on this is underway.

The current ABC television program 'song birds' alerts us to many aspects of prison life, even in a 'low security' environment: see <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/geo/documentaries/interactive/jailbirds/>



Liaison with Catholic Social Services Australia

Participation in the CSSA-led Enrichment Program, and in their Annual General Meeting last month, helped ensure that our activities in Victoria integrate effectively with the work of CSSA, focused largely on Commonwealth government issues. CSSV also works to contribute to CSSA's efforts in that sphere. The alignment of effort between the two levels, and the avoidance of any overlap, are priority goals for CSSV.

A group of NSW members of CSSA visited CSSV in late October to discuss cooperation between agencies in Victoria and to see what lessons there might be for our NSW counterparts.

Around the Sector

Advent and Christmas

This is a busy time of year for social service providers.

One of our members is organising a series of prayer sessions that staff can opt to take part in, with a focus on 'nurturing the spirit for justice'. Details of this will go on our website, when they are finalised.

Many members also have innovative and mission-focused options for gifts and cards that can be used at Christmas. There is multiple benefit here: generating funds for programs; alerting purchasers to the needs of their fellow community members; and helping to break a cycle of consumerism that can dominate the Christmas season. As we become aware of these, they will also be highlighted on our website – please alert Emmy Silvius to particular initiatives – esilvius@css.org.au, tel 9287 5566.

Forgotten Generation

On 16 November the Australian Parliament issued an Apology to those hundreds of thousands of Australians who had suffered in orphanages and other residential arrangements. Congratulations to the Australian Parliament and to Prime Minister Rudd and Opposition Leader Turnbull on their leadership in this matter.

MacKillop Family Services hosted around 100 former residents of their founding agencies for a viewing of the apology, followed by lunch. This was part of their program of assistance and ministry to this vulnerable group. It was well received by those who participated.

As the Prime Minister and others pointed out, the apology should, among other things, heighten our commitment to children and others who today are cared for away from their homes. It should also serve to alert us to the potential for other programs to go wrong, and to challenge us to humbly address whatever ill effects might result from any of our efforts. Click here for the statement issued by the Australian Bishops in response to the apology: <http://www.cam.org.au/latest-news/statement-from-the-catholic-church-on-the-national-apology-to-people-who-suffered-in-institutional-care.html>

'Women and Money' DVD released by Good Shepherd

Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services recently released a DVD aimed at providing information and education for women faced with financial issues. The DVD is entitled 'Women and Money, stories, struggles, solutions'. This resource is based on the personal experience of GSYFM staff with their clients. The 18 minute presentation can be obtained through the agency on www.goodshepvic.org.au

Comely Bank Retreat in Healesville welcomes victims of the recent bushfires

The Sisters of Charity have generously offered their facilities at Comely Bank at Healesville to be used for counselling sessions, overnight stays etc. They have a huge house that can sleep up to eight people plus a hall with fully equipped kitchen. For further details see <http://www.css.org.au/documents/ComelyBankOffer.pdf>.



Anti-Poverty Week success

Congratulation to all who participated in the recent Anti-Poverty Week activities. A report from national convener Julian Disney commented on the numerical growth and innovative range of activities. Thanks especially to David Renouf at Jesuit Social Services and others involved in leadership of the event.



Episcopal Vicar for Health and Aged Care honoured

Pope Benedict has conferred the title of Monsignor on Fr. Tony Ireland, the Episcopal Vicar for Health and Aged Care services in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. The title recognises Fr Tony's significant contribution to the Melbourne Church, and the major leadership roles that he continues to undertake. CSSV congratulates Monsignor Tony on this honour.

Articles of Interest – Editors pick

2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. This site provides news and information about the conference including calendar, facts, blog, forum. See <http://en.cop15.dk/>
Also of interest <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/copenhagen>

In addition, the Earth Charter website is worth a visit at <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/>



The Earth Charter Initiative is an extraordinarily diverse, global network of people, organizations, and institutions that participate in promoting and implementing the values and principles of the Earth Charter.

The Australian link is <http://www.earthcharter.org.au/>

The Earth charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a JUST, PEACEFUL and SUSTAINABLE global society in the 21st century.

Child Mortality Breakthroughs. "...great gains are being made.... But when it comes to child mortality, the power exists to effect great change. These recent figures should therefore be seen as a milestone along the road to ending preventable child deaths. With the right approach, it could be a short road." See <http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=17172>

For your diary



1 December 2009 – CSSV Political Forum



Fri 18 December 2009 – reporting back from CSSA Enrichment program



Thurs 11 March 2010 - CSSV Commissioning Mass and Annual General meeting

All Saints Church and Hall, Nth Carlton, followed by supper at St Mary's House of Welcome, 165 Brunswick St, Fitzroy. Enquiries to *Emmy Silvius*, Tel 9287 5566, esilvius@css.org.au



Friday 20 August 2010 - CSSV Annual Dinner



23-29 November 2009 – Social Inclusion week

Social Inclusion Week runs from 23-29th November and gives us the chance to focus on what it means to be Australian, to give others a fair go, and to realise that we all benefit when we feel connected, supported and cared for. Further details at <http://socialinclusionweek.ning.com/>



Sun 29 November 2009, 11am - Bushfire Recovery Mass

At St Patrick's Cathedral, Archbishop Hart shall especially pray for survivors of Black Saturday and the Bushfire Communities. The Archbishop extends an invitation to the wider community for all to attend this special Mass.



3 to 9 December 2009 – Parliament of the World's Religions

PWR is the world's largest inter-religious event which is held once every five years. The Melbourne Parliament will bring together more than 8,000 people from across Australia and around the world, including renowned spiritual, religious and political leaders. This year's theme is *Make a World of Difference: Hearing each other, healing the earth*. It reflects the urgent need for religious and spiritual communities and all people of goodwill to act on their concerns. See <http://www.parliamentofreligions.org>





Who am I?

Fr Tony Kerin –Episcopal Vicar for Justice & Social Services in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

Q: Tell us about where you work and your role

I am parish priest of St Martin de Porres parish in Avondale Heights. I have been there six years now and enjoyed every minute of it. Prior to this I worked full time as associate judicial vicar and judge with the Tribunal of the Catholic Church. Well nearly full time, I found the time at weekends to spend 10 years as a founding ecumenical chaplain to Mt Buller Alpine Resort. I have been involved with marriage education for thirty years and spent 6 years on the International Board of Catholic Engaged Encounter and 4 years as President of the Catholic Society for Marriage Education.



I am also currently Secretary of the Archbishop’s Council of Priests, Canonical Administrator of Ave Maria Secondary College, Essendon and State Chaplain to the Knights of the Southern Cross.

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

I should do my very best to carefully plan everything I am going to do, then be prepared to smile as it is all swept aside when circumstances change. This is a ploy the Holy Spirit uses to prevent me getting too confident that I am in control. We have to leave some gaps in everything we do if God is to infiltrate our plans and surprise us with results beyond our expectations. Otherwise things will only ever be as good as my limited imaginings.

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

Monday is my day off. I like to strike my golf ball as few times as possible... unless I am on the practice range. There I like to hit as many as I can. In winter I also enjoy skiing at Mt Buller. On annual leave I prefer to pursue my interest in marine biology and underwater photography.

Q: Have you a particular role model?

I am inspired by the application of Edward Debono and his lateral thinking solutions to issues, but I do not aspire to one particular role model. I think I can learn from anyone who has obviously thought of the things I missed. I do enjoy listening to people who think differently to me, even if I do not agree with them.

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

I would love a magic spell that replaced “self interest” with “human interest”.

Contact us

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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