

## mini MICAH – May 2010

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

*With apologies for the time that has elapsed since our last edition, and with the hope that the Easter season continues to inspire*

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#### For your diary

- ✚ Wednesday 2 June 2010 – Breakfast Briefing with **Brigid Arthur csb**  
**Topic: Asylum Seekers in Victoria – an update on how families are currently faring**  
[Click here for flyer](#), RSVP by 28 May – Cost \$15
- ✚ Tuesday 6 July – Workshop on best practice in **living and articulating Catholic Ethos**
- ✚ 16 July 2010 - Breakfast Briefing with **Jacqueline Remond from Catholic Earthcare**
- ✚ Friday 20 August 2010 – **CSSV Annual Dinner**. Guest speaker: Elizabeth Proust
- ✚ Tuesday 21 September - **2010 gathering of religious working in Catholic social services**. Detailed agenda to be advised

**Who am I?** – **Veronica Hassett**, Manager, Wellsprings for Women

### **CSSV 2010 Commissioning Mass and AGM**

On 11 March this year around 80 members and friends of CSSV joined in celebrating our combined works and in pledging to continue to better the lives of the most vulnerable in our society. Mass, led by Bishop Les Tomlinson, was followed by the AGM during which the Chair of CSSV - Peter Bearsley and Executive Director - Denis Fitzgerald spoke on the events of the past year as well as the vision for the future. [Click here](#) for Denis' talk.



Melissa Brickell, Coordinator Aboriginal Partnerships at MacKillop Family Services was our guest speaker. She was eloquent and moving in speaking on the *Sharing of Vision and Commitment*. Click for [the text of Melissa's talk](#).



Refreshments at St Mary's House of Welcome in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy complemented the formal parts of the evening. This enabled many people from different agencies and programs to admire the modern facilities from which St Mary's now reaches out to those who are marginalised within what many of us experience as an affluent society. Special thanks to all who led and participated in the celebration of our shared mission.

*Pictured: from left, CSSV Chair Peter Bearsley, Executive Director Denis Fitzgerald, and Treasurer David Beaver.*

### Changes to CSSV Council membership

At the AGM Peter Bearsley was re-elected Chair of the Council of CSSV, and three new members joined the Council: Micaela Cronin, CEO of MacKillop Family Services; Michael Perusco, CEO of Sacred Heart Mission; and Jamie Edwards, Director of Centacare Gippsland. Welcome!

Departures from the Council were Arda Tymensen, long serving Director of Centacare Gippsland, who recently retired from that role; Patrick Gallagher, whose multi-faceted involvement with CSSV still involves his roles as CEO of Corpus Christi Community Greenvale, Chair of the John Pierce Centre, and Board member at Griefline; and Bernie O'Regan, formerly Manager of Child and Family Services at MacKillop Family Services. The Catholic social services sector is blessed to have people of this calibre who have been prepared to make such a contribution to our collective mission.

[Click here](#) for a profile of members of the CSSV Council.

### Victoria Parliamentary inquiry into Rural and Regional Disadvantage

The Victorian Parliament is currently engaged in an inquiry into Disadvantage and Inequity in Rural and Regional areas. CSSV worked with regional St Vincent de Paul representatives, Centacare agencies, and other groups in formulating a submission to the inquiry – [click here for copy](#). The submission reminded the Committee of the geographical distribution of entrenched disadvantage that had been identified by the 2007 Dropping off the Edge research by Professor Tony Vinson, and drew on consultations held in Ballarat, Warragul, Bairnsdale and Bendigo to reflect the sense of lack of voice and of deficits in services and in opportunities that are deeply felt in regional Victoria. A meeting on 12 May with members of the Committee will provide a further opportunity to underline these issues, and the need for a comprehensive response to them from Government.

### Spirituality in Catholic social services – Beth Crisp

Thanks to **Assoc Prof Beth Crisp** for an engaging Breakfast Briefing to a capacity crowd on 24 February, on the subject of **spirituality in Catholic social services**.

As Beth's presentation, and the subsequent discussion, highlighted, there are many aspects to the interaction of spirituality and social services, which could only be touched on or alluded to in a short breakfast presentation and discussion. The hope is that each of us will be informed and stimulated to follow up some aspects to develop our own engagement, and to enable us better to engage with others, be they clients or colleagues.

[Click here](#) for a copy of a recent paper which Beth has made available which discusses many of the points covered in her Breakfast presentation. And [click here](#) for a copy of the recent McCosker Oration 'The Church as an Advocate in the Public Square', by Frank Brennan SJ, that Beth referred to in her talk.



## Working towards National Disability insurance - Bruce Bonyhady

Bruce Bonyhady, Chair of Yoralla, inspired those who attended our April breakfast briefing on the topic of Why Australia needs a National Disability Scheme.

[Click here](#) for a copy of Bruce's presentation, and [here](#) for a report on the Briefing. Bruce exhorted all to make a contribution, through [www.ndis.org.au](http://www.ndis.org.au) or [www.australiansmadashell.com.au](http://www.australiansmadashell.com.au).

CSSV will be making a submission to the current Productivity Commission enquiry into a national disability scheme. Please contact Denis if you would be interested in contributing to that –

[dfitzgerald@css.org.au](mailto:dfitzgerald@css.org.au).



*[Photo: Bruce Bonyhady; Carol Vale]*

## Enquiry into aged care

The Productivity Commission has recently commenced a wide-ranging enquiry into aged care in Australia. Some CSSV members are interested in cooperating in a submission that, would add emphasis to the needs of those who are most vulnerable. This would be developed in cooperation with those of other relevant bodies – including members who are working on the issues, and Catholic Health Australia. Denis Fitzgerald ([dfitzgerald@css.org.au](mailto:dfitzgerald@css.org.au)) would welcome contact from anyone who wants to be involved in this, or who has any queries or comments.

## Training options for Pastoral Carers in Aged Care

CSSV in conjunction with CHA and a number of Diocesan agencies continues to promote discussion of options for the upgrading of training for pastoral care workers, particularly in Aged Care facilities. Existing theological and pastoral formation training in our accredited colleges offers a good basis to begin, and this can be supported by developing new units specifically for the aged care or any other sector.

## Reflections on abuse in the Church

None of us have been unaffected by the revelations of sexual abuse within the Church that have been so prominent over recent months. As part of our response, CSSV has organised a briefing session for members on the arrangements that are in place in Victoria for handling complaints or allegations about abuse in Church organisations. If you are associated with a CSSV member and would like to attend this session, or find out more about these processes, then you could contact Denis Fitzgerald, at tel 9287 5569, e [dfitzgerald@css.org.au](mailto:dfitzgerald@css.org.au), or your CEO.

There have been many reports and reflections on this issue, with those from within the Church focusing on how to provide support and redress for those affected; and to do what we can to ensure that this does not happen again. At the same time, we need to address the shame that we all feel, and to build on that in maintaining a focus on the Gospel mission that we are called to. [Click here](#) for a copy of Pope Benedict's letter to the Irish Church, and [here](#) for 'We're all in this together', a reflection from Julie Edwards, CEO of Jesuit Social Services

## Criminal Justice focus as Victorian election draws closer

Building on an airing of the issues at our 2009 Political Forum, over the past weeks CSSV has been able to meet with Opposition and Government leaders to discuss the imbalance in the current political debate on 'law and order' issues. Our argument is that community safety will be enhanced much more effectively if we provide support for families and young people to prevent criminal behaviour; if charges can be addressed in an environment that is conducive to restorative justice for all parties; and if the focus is kept on enabling offenders to return to society as a full participant, with skills, work, housing and community support. Absent these



elements, the funds for additional police, and for additional prison capacity, that were provided in the recent Victorian budget, will not achieve their goal – see [an article by Julie Edwards](#) in The Age on 7 April for an articulate presentation of this position.

The Victorian Council of Churches has also moved to address this issue, with the establishment of an **inter-Church Criminal Justice Taskforce**, which CSSV is chairing. This group aims to provide an alternative voice to those that dominate the popular media. It plans to cooperate with others active in the sector to provide information to the various Churches prior to the Victorian election on key aspects of the criminal justice system, including the normative dimensions for Christians of restorative justice, and of ensuring that the human dignity of offenders is respected as we work towards a society that is safer for all.

### **Proposal for weekend of spiritual renewal for women in the social services sector**

There has been quite a degree of interest expressed in a few days of spiritual renewal, or retreat, for women involved in various capacities in Catholic social services. In light of this, we are looking into booking a Friday evening through to Saturday in October or November of this year at a retreat centre in Melbourne.

We are still in the process of working out further details and will keep you informed as these come to light.

Please contact Emmy on [esilvius@css.org.au](mailto:esilvius@css.org.au) or 9287 5566 if you have any suggestions and/or wish to register your interest.



## **Around the Sector**

### **Liquor licensing threat at Corpus Christi Community, Greenvale**

Quite a large crowd attended a recent public hearing into the application for a liquor licence across the road from Corpus Christi Community Greenvale. There was strong support for the Community from residents and staff and from other community agencies in the area. Some local Greenvale residents also supported the Community in its argument that the benefits to the community as a whole, and to the residents of the Community, should not be overthrown by the commercial interests of one of Australia's largest liquor retailer. The outcome of the licence application is keenly awaited.

### **Church Resources opens Melbourne Office**

Church Resources, which assists Church organisations in their procurement and buying strategies, has appointed Business Development manager for Victoria/Tasmania. Damian Jardine is located at The Cardinal Knox Centre, 383 Albert Street, East Melbourne, and can be contacted at [djardine@churchresources.com.au](mailto:djardine@churchresources.com.au) or on 0408 833 063. Further details about Church Resources are available at [www.churchresources.com.au](http://www.churchresources.com.au)



### **Working for minimum standards for rental accommodation**

[Click here](#) for further information on the VCOSS call on the Victorian Government to introduce basic standards for all rental properties.

### **Fair Trade Fortnight – 1 to 16 May**



The Fairtrade fortnight is an annual event in which fair and ethical trading values are celebrated. The concept was pioneered by the Fairtrade Foundation in the United Kingdom, and held firstly in 1997 in Scotland. This turned out to be a highly successful campaign to get every supermarket throughout Scotland to stock Fairtrade products. It spread to the rest of the United Kingdom the following year. Today, Fairtrade fortnights are celebrated in several countries, most notably Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The Good Shepherd Trading Circle is one of many initiatives around Australia promoting the use of Fair trade goods. See <http://www.thetradingcircle.com.au/index.asp>



### National eConference, Mary - First Disciple: Tuesday 18 May

The key presenter Fr Frank Maloney SDB will explore Mary as disciple, woman and mother. For further information, registration and to view previous eConferences go to [www.bbi.catholic.edu.au](http://www.bbi.catholic.edu.au) or contact Virginia Ryan on (02) 9847 0556, email [vryan@bbi.catholic.edu.au](mailto:vryan@bbi.catholic.edu.au)

### Wed 26 May, 12.00 – 1.00pm, Social Justice in the City – St Vincent de Paul Society

Lectures take place at St Francis Pastoral Centre, Cnr Lonsdale & Elizabeth Streets, Melbourne on the last Wednesday of each month. All are welcome. Further information on topics and speakers can be acquired from Paul on 9895 5800.

On 26 May, Speaker DANUSIA KASKA, Vice-President St Vincent de Paul Society National Council, will speak on 'The Global Epidemic of Aids: From A Vincentian Perspective'.

### Communities in Control Conference – 31 May to 2 June

Once again Centacare Melbourne is involved with Our Community in running the Communities in Control Conference". I believe the program for this year is our best ever. The presenters and research are all very current and at the cutting edge. The title of the conference this year is "**Power Up!**" The analysis of power and influence is very timely and useful to us as community groups and social service agencies as we seek to develop strategies to influence the shape of the society and communities that we are part of.

As usual there will also be plenty of fun and inspiration. Even if you can't attend the conference may I would urge you to consider nominating a community group, an individual or a project for the inaugural "**Kookaburra Awards**".

The two day conference is on in Melbourne May 31 - June 1 at Moonee Valley Race Course. [Click here](#) for bookings and for information about the Kookaburra Awards that will honour and recognise those who have helped to change the world for the better.

### Refugee Week – 20 to 26 June

This year's theme is "Freedom from Fear". The quest for freedom from fear is at the heart of a refugee's flight from danger. This is acknowledged in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (and its 1967 Protocol), which defines a refugee as:

*Any person who **owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted** for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country. See*

[http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/newsevents/rw\\_index.html](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/newsevents/rw_index.html) for further information.



### Who am I?

#### Profiling

Veronica Hassett

Manager, Wellsprings for Women

#### Tell us about where you work and your role

I am currently employed as the Manager for Wellsprings for Women Inc, which is a project of the Presentation Sisters of Victoria. Wellsprings' vision is to 'empower isolated women to live their lives more fully'. We serve about 300 women a week from all backgrounds, regardless of creed, race, or culture. I wear many hats at Wellsprings, as we provide an open-door policy for the community. For example, today as I write this, I have found a school for a student visa holder to send her children, I have provided emergency funding for uniforms and books, and the next minute I am business planning for the future direction plan for Wellsprings. I believe that wellsprings provide an external ministry that is an extension of the Catholic Church. External stakeholders look up to our organisation and refer marginalised and isolated





women to Wellsprings, and we offer support to all. The challenge of this role is balancing the pastoral work and business.

I have been married for 31 years and have four adult daughters. I was born in Mauritius, lived in England for 18 years, and came to Australia in 1977. My professional background is in education and counselling. And have previously been employed as a Pastoral Associate.

**Have you a piece of advice or an encouragement that has helped you in life or work**

On a personal note, before I start my day at work, I usually say a special prayer "Loving God be in my thoughts, in my words and in my action".

**What do you do to wind down or relax?**

I enjoy watching a good movie with my husband, and going for long walks. I also keep a personal journal of 40years and find this is a very therapeutic way of ending my day.

**Have you a particular role model?**

My role model is Martin Luther King his dream and passion for a justice world. I am also inspired by the quote "our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frighten us."

**If there is one thing you can change in this world what would it be?**

Time Clocks, time has become like money and we never seem to have enough of it, everything is calculated by time, and now everything we do is around a time frame.

**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.

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