

mini MICAH – June 2010

Monthly update for members and friends of Catholic Social Services Victoria

Contents

Catholic Social Services News & Developments

- ✚ Presentation on spirituality and mission
- ✚ Catholic social teaching
- ✚ Asylum seekers and follow up Briefing on abuse in the Church
- ✚ Enquiry into Rural and Regional disadvantage
- ✚ Productivity Commission - Enquiry into aged care
- ✚ Productivity Commission – Disability Care and Support
- ✚ Criminal Justice
- ✚ Women's retreat update

Around the Sector

- ✚ Order of Australia awards – Congratulations to Peter Johnstone and Elizabeth Proust
- ✚ Blake Cottage – offering hospitality to families of people in prison
- ✚ Wed 30 June, 12.00 – 1.00pm, Social Justice in the City – St Vincent de Paul Society
- ✚ 20 to 26 June – Refugee Week

For your diary

- ✚ Thursday 8 July – **'Nurturing the founding spirit'** – a symposium on sustaining the mission and spirit of our organisations. RSVP by 2 July – [Click here for Flyer](#).
- ✚ Thursday 15 July - Breakfast Briefing with Jacqui Remond from Catholic Earthcare. Topic: **Protection and Care for our Environment – A Challenging Focus of Catholic Social Teaching**. [Click here for flyer](#), RSVP by 9 July
- ✚ Thursday 15 July - Workshop with Jacqui Remond from Catholic Earthcare on reducing the ecological footprint of your organisation - **Towards a sustainable world – starting with ourselves**. [Click here for Flyer](#). RSVP by 9 July
- ✚ Friday 20 August – **CSSV Annual Dinner**. Guest speaker: Elizabeth Proust
- ✚ Thursday 9 September: **Mental Health Best Practice Forum**. Further details to follow.
- ✚ Tuesday 21 September - **Gathering of religious working in Catholic social services**. Detailed agenda to be advised
- ✚ 12 – 13 November 2010, **Weekend of spiritual renewal for women in Catholic social services**, Janssen Spirituality Centre in Boronia



Who am I? Sr Margaret Armstong DC – Marillac



Presentation on Spirituality and Mission

On 18 May 2010 Denis Fitzgerald of Catholic Social Services Victoria and Jenny Glare of MacKillop Family Services led a 'Day of Reflection' for staff on the Archdiocese of Melbourne on the theme of spirituality and mission. [Click here](#) for the notes of their main presentation. The presentation is about the connection between our personal spirituality and our shared spirituality, and the vitality of the mission of a Catholic organisation. The main point is that there is a connection, which we should nurture.

Catholic social teaching

Catholic social teaching featured in the 18 May presentation as one dimension of our engaging with our particular mission. The principles of Catholic social teaching, starting with the inherent dignity of each person and the paramount importance of working for the common good, resonate strongly within Catholic social services. They should impact on our strategic decisions, and on our resource allocation. And, in various ways, they apply to all our endeavours, not just those that have an immediate focus on justice or on service.

CSSV is keen to work with any member organisations who want to explore or utilise these principles with groups of managers, staff, etc. Our Breakfast Briefing on 15 July, for example, will focus on exploring these principles as they relate to our responsibility for the environment. Staff from CSSV would also be happy to work with individual member organisations – please feel free to explore this further with Denis in the first instance, tel 9287 5569, dfitzgearld@css.org.au

Breakfast Briefing on Asylum Seekers

A full house turned out on 2 June to hear Sr Brigid Arthur present an update on asylum seekers in Victoria. A focus during the briefing on the lives of individuals, who are traumatised by these legal and political structures, challenges all of us to renewed effort to seek reform. One specific outcome of that morning has been a proposal for a repeat of the 2008 gathering of Catholic agencies involved in support for recently arrived communities – community services agencies, parishes, etc – with a view to sharing wisdom and facilitating greater combined effectiveness.

Briefing on abuse in the Church

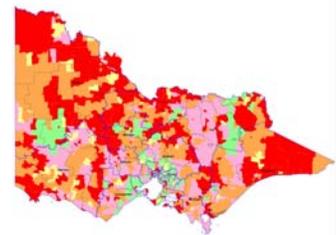
Feedback was positive from a briefing for CSSV members on 20 May about the processes in place in Victoria for handling complaints about abuse in Church organisations. Sr Angela Ryan spoke on the national 'towards healing' program, and Mr Francis Moore, Business Manager of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, on arrangements in place in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. It was a mutually informative exchange.

A follow up email to members highlighted that, in addition to complying with all requirements of the civil law concerning the employment of persons in work involving children and young people, all Church organisations should have in place preventative programs. And, as the documentation for Towards Healing notes, all leaders and members of the Church have our part to play in addressing this shameful and hurtful chapter in our history, and we must respond in a way that is humble, honest and thoroughly Christian.

Enquiry into Rural and Regional Disadvantage

A group of CSSV representatives appeared before a Parliamentary Inquiry into Disadvantage and Inequity in Rural and Regional Victoria in Ballarat on 12 May. CSSV representatives, along with David Beaver from Centacare Ballarat and Anne Dark Ballarat Regional President of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, spoke to the submission that had been submitted earlier – [click here](#) to access a copy. The submission included high level findings on regional disadvantage and its causes from 'Dropping off the Edge', and built on consultations with staff of CSSV members in Ballarat, Bendigo, Bairnsdale and Trafalgar that reflected a sense of lack of voice and of deficits in services and in opportunities that are deeply felt in regional Victoria.

A brief presentation was followed by a very broad range of questions from the committee members.





Productivity Commission Enquiry into Aged Care

CSSV has met with several members recently and identified some key issues for the aged care submission. The focus of discussion has been on the special needs of people who are homeless, and the grave shortage of capital funding for this sub-sector, which are themes that we would want to stress to the inquiry. This submission will be aligned with and complement that of Catholic Health Australia.

Productivity Commission – Disability Care and Support

The current Productivity Commission reference on Disability Care and Support has recently released an issue paper for review. This Commission has been tasked with review of the proposal for a universal system of care and support for people with a disability in Australia. [Click here for the issue paper.](#)



CSSV is currently working on a submission that will include:

- a reflection on directions that might emerge in this area from Catholic social teaching
- policy issues and priorities as discerned by our member organisations that are involved in disability support
- some priorities, etc that emerge from a dialogue with some of the carers who are associated with our network - to get geographic and other coverage, there might be a couple of gatherings involved
- priorities, issues that might emerge from a dialogue with some people with disabilities who are associated with our network

Comments on any aspect of the Review or of the proposed CSSV submission would be appreciated. In addition, dialogue with some carers and people with disabilities is also planned as part of this broader exercise. This would take place relatively soon. Please contact Denis Fitzgerald if you are aware of people who might be involved in this, either as part of your organisation or as part of a separate focus group.

Criminal Justice

Pre-election political comment and popular media coverage of criminal justice issues continues to miss the crucial point that our society will not become safer through the imposition of more and longer jail sentences – prevention, support and resettlement are central to a just and effective solution. CSSV has joined the [Smart Justice network](#) as part of our work to achieve a focus on true justice, and on long term community safety, including the well being of the more vulnerable members of our community.

Weekend of spiritual renewal for women in Catholic social services

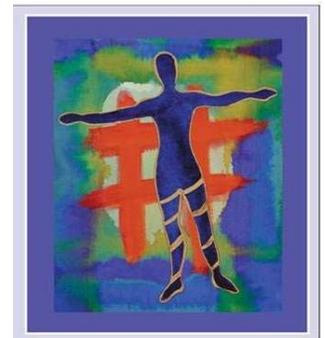
Date: 12 – 13 November 2010

Venue: Janssen Spirituality Centre in Boronia

Progress is underway for our weekend (Friday night through to Saturday) retreat of rest and spiritual renewal.

We are still working out further details regarding the retreat director and theme which we aim to have formulated within the next few weeks.

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





Around the Sector

Recognition by the Order of Australia

Congratulations to Elizabeth Proust, Patron of MacKillop Family Services, and Peter Johnstone, Chair of Vincent Care, on their recently announced Order of Australia awards. Congratulations too to Bruce Bonyhady, who inspired those attending a recent Breakfast Briefing on the need for a national scheme of support for people with disabilities, and who was also honoured in the recent list.

Among many areas of contribution, Peter Johnstone is currently chair of Vincent Care, and a former Chair of Catholic Social Services Victoria, and of Jesuit Social Services. He has also had a distinguished career in public administration, heading up Victorian Government Departments and several local government authorities. Congratulations to Peter on his OAM award.

Elizabeth Proust is currently a Patron of MacKillop Family Services, as well as holding a number of governance roles in the private and public sector. Her distinguished contribution to public administration continues through her leading enquiries into key areas of current concern in the community. As it happens, Elizabeth will also be the guest speaker at this year's CSSV annual dinner, on 20 August 2010. Congratulations to Elizabeth on her appointment as an Officer of the Order of Australia.

Blake Cottage – offering hospitality to families of people in prison

Blake Cottage, conducted by the Sisters of Charity in Castlemaine, offers hospitality for families visiting people imprisoned in the two facilities in that area – [click here for a copy](#) of a recent article in *Kairos* on the Cottage and its mission.

Refugee Week



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.* [Click here](#) for further information.

Wed 30 June, 12.00 – 1.00pm, Social Justice in the City – St Vincent de Paul Society Speaker: Dr John Honner. Topic: St Louise de Marillac.

St Louise was a confidant of St Vincent de Paul, and she founded the Daughters of Charity, who auspice Marillac and St Mary's House of Welcome - see following item on Daughter of Charity Margaret Armstrong.

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 can be acquired from Paula Salemme on 9895 5800.



Who am I?

Sr Margaret Armstrong DC – Pastoral Care Worker at Marillac Disability Services



Tell us about where you work and your role

I work with the people we support at Marillac, both in supported accommodation and in the community. My role in pastoral care primarily exists in developing relationships which have value and meaning. I have a great deal of social contact which is mutually enjoyable. We enjoy music, relaxation and fun which is often initiated by the people we support, so I just “fall into line”. I also use massage and music for those who prefer these experiences. Times of sadness and distress for many reasons require that I “be with” people; just by being present and listening. I am conscious that my role is not to “fix it”.

I also engage with staff as a colleague and in guiding reflections at staff meetings. I prepare material and give support in the areas of mission and spirituality so that the charism of the Daughters of Charity may be carried on by our dedicated staff.

For special Marillac functions, I am sometimes called upon to represent the Daughters’ of Charity values, history and charism. I am also the Daughters representative on the boards of Marillac and St. Mary’s House of Welcome.

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

My continuing inspiration is the life, works, and spirituality of Sts. Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac which is shared by Daughters of Charity throughout the world. The primary place of Mission in our lives continues to give me life and energy. My advice after 53 years as a Daughter of Charity is that the essential values in our lives of service are respect, working WITH people, in relationship, rather than FOR them, and being patient in waiting on the Providence of God.

What do you do to wind down or relax?

Swim, read, watch good movies, engage socially on a regular basis with friends and family.

Have you a particular role model?

Louise de Marillac. Her values, philosophy and her life continue to inspire me. I have also had some excellent teachers along the way who have encouraged and inspired me. Their influence continues.

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

Political and social systems and structures which keep people marginalised and in poverty.

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.

Catholic Social Services Victoria
383 Albert St (PO Box 146) East Melbourne Vic 3002

<p><i>Denis Fitzgerald</i> Executive Director dfitzgerald@css.org.au 9287 5569</p>	<p><i>Terry O'Shannassy</i> Member Support and Projects toshannassy@css.org.au 9287 5570</p>	<p><i>Emmy Silvius</i> Office Administrator esilvius@css.org.au 9287 5566</p>
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