

Christmas greetings to all associated with the work of Catholic social services in Victoria - staff and volunteers, those we serve, those we cooperate with, and those who auspice and guide us. May the inspiration and Grace of Christmas enrich your world, and lead into a joyous and rewarding 2012.



[Click here](#) for volunteering opportunities over Christmas.

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Developments at Catholic Social Services

Inviting Associate Membership of Catholic Social Services Victoria

Full Members of Catholic Social Services Victoria are Catholic community service works operating in Victoria. These are listed on our [website](#).

An Associate Member is an individual who is willing to promote the mission and objects of Catholic Social Services Victoria. An email to the [Executive Director](#) seeking Associate Membership would initiate this application process.

Life membership is conferred on an individual by the Council in recognition of individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the work of Catholic Social Services Victoria and to the wider welfare sector. Sr Tony Matha ibvm AM and Fr Kevin Mogg AM are the current life members.



CSSV Council planning

Members of the CSSV [Council and its committees](#) met on 2 December to focus on planning for 2012. It was an energised session, facilitated by Sheree Limbrick of CatholicCare.

2011 was seen as a good year for CSSV in its role of contributing to the mission of the Church in service and work for justice through its work as a peak body for the Catholic community sector. Highlights included activity in advocacy around criminal justice reforms and leading submissions and networking across a range of current issues. There was a strong network development and member support program, focused largely around sector gatherings and events, but including the welcoming of five new members and support for the establishment of CatholicCare Victoria Tasmania. Among other contributions to reflection on Catholic identity, a highlight was the conference on Mary MacKillop's contribution to Catholic social services.



The framework of the current strategic priorities was re-affirmed, namely

- Policy & advocacy
- Network development and member support
- Catholic ethos and identity

Building on 2011, we need now to continue to strengthen our contribution to the sector and to those that we serve: to energise the sector as a network, and to involve all age groups; to continue the broadening of ownership within the

CSSV community of the work program. The need to focus and deliver well on a number of agreed priorities was accepted by all.

Any comments or suggestions for our work program would be welcomed, including suggestions on particular activities or topics that might be addressed. This would then be fed into the plan to be considered by Council in early 2012.

Welcome to Lucia Brick

Welcome to Lucia, who has recently joined Catholic Social Services Victoria as Executive Assistant in our office, joining Denis Fitzgerald and Terry O'Shannassy. Lucia comes to CSSV after a temporary role at Carers Victoria, eight years with Macedon Ranges Council, and earlier work with the Kyneton Parish and with the Religious Education Texts Project of the Melbourne Archdiocese. Lucia has made a great start, and is looking forward to being of assistance to all of our members and stakeholders, and to meeting you all over time.

Thanks to Carmen Montalto who helped out in the office over the past five months, and enabled us to implement our full events calendar over that period.

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking Humans - ACRATH

ACRATH has been gaining in momentum as it works on a number of fronts to address trafficking issues in Australia and beyond, and to assist the people, largely women, who are the victims of this trade.

One constraint to their work has been the shortage of housing options, both crisis and longer-term. This is notwithstanding an increasing level of interest from Governments.



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A group of CSSV members that work with women who have been homeless recently met with ACRATH, Red Cross and others to explore options for women who have been rescued. While solutions are constrained by current shortages of accommodation, the meeting usefully clarified some of the needs and issues, and a further meeting on 8 February 2012 will explore more detailed housing options with member providers. [Terry O'Shannassy](#) would be happy to discuss any aspect of this work.

Vulnerable children

The wide-ranging Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry is drawing to a close, with a report due to be tabled in Parliament on 8 February 2012. A recent gathering of CSSV members active in this field shared ideas around the likely impact of recommendations coming from the inquiry, and what might be an appropriate response on release of the report.

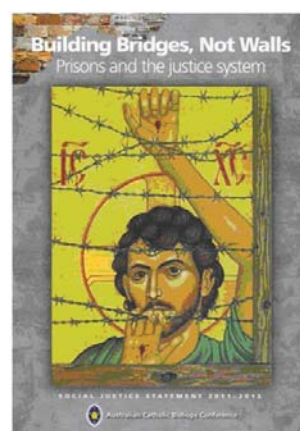
One key issue will be the availability of adequate funds to provide the level of care that is needed. But there are also many others. This will be an important focus in the new year.

Criminal Justice – focusing on a safer, more just society

The Victorian Government's active agenda in criminal justice has continued in the news, as various reports and forums highlighted alternatives to the 'tough on crime' policy proposals that are working through the system.

With members and with the Inter-Church Criminal Justice Task Force, CSSV is submitting a range of budget proposals that would ameliorate aspects of the current system, particularly in relation to diversion to restorative processes at the time of trial, and to support in prison and beyond. We are also finalizing a paper calling for a focus on the longer term costs of increased utilization of prison, compared to measures to prevent the development of criminal behaviour, or to intervene early to assist those, especially young people, who need help.

This complements the work of Smart Justice, of which we are part, and the strong advocacy of Jesuit Social Services, CatholicCare and other member organisations.



Ministry to Priests

CSSV has been working with the Ministry to Priests to provide an introduction to community services to a number of priests who have moved to Australia to work in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Thanks to Sacred Heart Mission for augmenting this with a hands on visit to their site on 13 December.

This is one element of our longer-term program to optimize the connection and the sense of shared mission between Catholic social service providers and the Parishes that operate throughout Victoria.

Mental Health workshops

Work is underway to develop a short series of follow-ups to the mental health workshop held in September 2010. These are intended to assist member organisations in their own services as they interact with people with mental illness. [Helen Burt](#) is working on this, with members of the Member Support Committee. Any ideas or comments would be most welcome.

CSSV Mission Network

This network supports people within an organisation that have responsibility for, or a particular interest in, the strengthening of the mission-focus, and its integration into the life of the organisation. The network held its final meeting for the year on 17 November, with a discussion that focused in part on the role of boards in articulating and driving the mission of an organisation. Induction and formation for Board members and a number of related issues provided lots of food for thought. Thanks to those from a range of members, and from Catholic health service providers, who participated during the year.

The network will meet every two months in 2012. [Denis Fitzgerald](#) would be happy to provide further information, etc, or to discuss participation in the network.

Media items - CatholicCare

Several recent items in *The Age* have been critical of Catholic social service providers, and in each case the organisation concerned needed to provide further information to clarify the reports and put them into a context that would enable the reader to understand the situation.



CatholicCare Melbourne [responded](#) to criticisms published in *The Saturday Age* on 3 December of the way the Catholic Church and CatholicCare manages sexual abuse claims.

CatholicCare Sydney [responded](#) to allegations of misconduct in employment service program that were aired in a front page article in *The Age* on 12 December. CatholicCare Melbourne also needed to clarify for readers that this article in fact referred to the Sydney organisation, and not to Melbourne.

CSSV supports both organisations as they work through these matters; and we reflect that these issues, and the reporting of them, can be an opportunity for all of us to strengthen our resolve to excel in our mission-driven commitment to the people that we serve. [Denis Fitzgerald](#), tel 9287 5569, would be happy to discuss any aspect of these matters.

For your calendar

Breakfast Briefing, Health and Justice – 22nd February 2012

In conjunction with Catholic Health Australia, Catholic Social Services Victoria is pleased to invite members and friends to a **Breakfast Briefing**, on Wednesday 22 February 2012:



Topic: **Health Inequality: A justice challenge for Catholic Health and Welfare Providers**

Presenter: **Fr Frank Brennan SJ, Professor of Law, Public Policy Institute, Australian Catholic University**

Venue is the Cardinal Knox Centre, 383 Albert St, East Melbourne
Time is 7.15 for 7.30, finish at 8.45am.

Entry \$20, payable at door. RSVP by Friday 17 February to Lucia Brick at CSSV, lucia.brick@css.org.au, tel 9287 5566

 **2012 CSSV AGM and Commissioning Mass - 14 March**, commencing at 4.30pm at All Saints Church, Fitzroy

 **2012 CSSV Annual Dinner – Friday 24 August**

Sector events and developments

Openings for volunteers on Christmas Day

Southern Cross Care:

Springvale Residential Centre - to assist the kitchen staff serving the Christmas lunch to the residents and their families.

Cardinal Knox Village in Dandenong - w to help with morning tea, and to assist with afternoon tea. They would like volunteers to chat to those residents who won't have any visitors on the day.

Please contact Alicia Barrett, on T: (03) 8564 1826 or email: abarrett@southern-cross.org.au for further information.

Villa Maria Aged Care Centres:

Bundoora, setting tables for Christmas lunch

Prahran, serving lunch and social visiting

Berwick, serving lunch and social visiting

Contact Bron Summers, on 9855 7659 or bronwyn.summers@villamaria.com.au by Tuesday 20/12.

Good Shepherd Microfinance Australia

Best wishes to newly-established Good Shepherd Microfinance Australia and its inaugural Chair, Christine Nixon. Christine's former roles include Victorian Police Chief Commissioner and Chair of the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority. Good Shepherd Microfinance Australia will continue the ground-breaking microfinance work of Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services, as they continue to work with communities, private partners, and governments to develop ethical financial services and improve access to affordable credit across Australia.

Spirituality and personal growth



The [Heart of Life Spirituality Centre](#) and the [Campion Centre of Ignatian Spirituality](#), both Melbourne-based, offer programs, courses, retreats etc to foster personal spiritual growth. Both centres work within the Catholic tradition, with its focus on justice and on service.

✚ Multi-faith and community wellbeing

The role of faith-based communities in promoting, and in averting threats to community safety has been an area of increased focus by law enforcement agencies around the world over the past decade.

Catholic Social Services Victoria participates in regular consultations with Victorian and Commonwealth bodies, along with representatives of other faith traditions. These consultations provide an opportunity to input in Government thinking, and to work with representatives of other religious communities on matters of common interest. A recent positive development, for example, was an offer by ASIO to attend meetings in particular communities to allay misunderstandings about how ASIO conducts its business.

Please contact [Denis Fitzgerald](#) if you would like to know more about these processes, or if you would like to raise any particular issue.

✚ Catholic Social Teaching Update

Catholic Social Teaching is the teaching of the Church on social issues. It is grounded in the Gospel and has built up over the years through reflection on service and work for justice, and through critique of societies and structures. It underpins the mission of Catholic Social Services Victoria and our members. Resources and reflections on Catholic Social Teaching abound.

One accessible website is the [Faith doing Justice](#) website of the Australian Jesuits. A recent application of Catholic Social Teaching is in the recent [Vatican analysis](#) of the international financial crisis. A current Australian application is an essay on *Aged Care Reform – Some Ethical Considerations* in the most recent edition of Catholic Health Australia's [Health Matters](#).

[Denis](#) or [Terry](#) would be happy to discuss any aspect of this, including opportunities for engagement by staff etc.

✚ Resource material for inclusion of people with disability.

[Click here](#) for a recent CSSV reflection on the international day for people with disability, and its challenges to us as individuals and communities. [Click here](#) for material from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference on making parish communities more inclusive, and click on the icon at left to express support for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. [Click here](#) for a video produced to help communities celebrate International Day of Persons with Disability 2011



✚ Events, to note just a few:

- ✚ 29 February 2012, St Vincent de Paul 'Social Justice in the City' series resumes. Dr John Falzon, will be presenting *"The Language of the Unheard"*. Midday, at St Francis Pastoral Centre, Lonsdale St, Melbourne.
- ✚ 24 March 2012, Bethlehem Community 'Homework' formal fundraiser. Email to [Bethlehem Community](#) or phone Alex on 0457 080 543.
- ✚ 24 March 2012, Jesuit Social Services Annual Dinner. Guest speaker: Mick Malthouse. [Click](#) for further information.
- ✚ 21 June 2012, [Vinnies CEO Sleepout](#).

Contact CSSV

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