

mini MICAH – July / August 2010

Update for members and friends of Catholic Social Services Victoria

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- ✚ Thursday 16 September – **Jesus the Christ eConference**. See article below
- ✚ Celebrating [Mary MacKillop’s](#) contribution to Catholic social services – see article below about 17 October events, and a seminar proposed for later in the year
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- ✚ Bethlehem Community – seeking an outreach / community development worker – enquiries to Carol Vale on tel 9462 3937

Who am I? **Michael Perusco** – CEO Sacred Heart Mission



“Jesus the Christ – Fully Human, Truly Divine” eConference Thursday 16 September

This national econference is organised by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Commission for Mission and Faith Formation and The Broken Bay Institute. Its aim is to provide participants with an excellent and free faith formation experience. **Presenter Gerald O’Collins SJ** will share his insights into the life and ministry of Christ. Fr O’Collins is an Australian Jesuit priest who is professor emeritus of theology at the Gregorian University in Rome, where he has lectured since 1974. He has authored or co-authored over fifty books.



For information regarding forming a group to participate contact Virginia Ryan at vryan@bbi.catholic.edu.au or phone (02) 9847 0556.

If you would like to express interest in joining a group at CSSV, please contact Emmy on esilvius@css.org.au or phone 9287 5566. **This conference starts at 10.30am and ends at 3.15pm.** [Click here for flyer](#)

Workshop for Religious associated with social services, 21 September 2010



The second CSSV workshop for Religious working in social services, and for others associated with the sector, is scheduled for Tuesday 21 September 2010.

The first of these forums was held in September 2009. It attracted a cross-section of Religious women and men associated with Catholic social services in Victoria, and was well received. One of the outcomes of that forum was the ['Nurturing the Founding Spirit'](#) symposium on 8 July 2010, at which around 50 CSSV leaders and representatives from Religious Congregations met to reflect on strategies, achievements and challenges in working within an organisation

to build on the spirit and charism that inspired those who laid the foundations for today's programs.

The purpose of this second gathering is similar to last year's:

- To recognise the contribution that Religious men and women are making to the clients and the work of Catholic social services
- To provide a forum for reflection and sharing on matters of common interest, particularly relating to strengthening the Catholic identity of Catholic social service organisations

When: 2.00 - 4.30pm, Tuesday 21 September

Where: Cardinal Knox Centre, 383 Albert St, East Melbourne

For Whom: Religious associated with social services - those working in agencies, who have previously worked in this sector, Congregational leaders, etc.

RSVP: Emmy Silvius, tel 9287 5566, esilvius@css.org.au by Wednesday 15 September.

Celebrating Mary MacKillop

History will be made on 17 October 2010 when Mary MacKillop will become Australia’s first canonised saint. Mary is a saint for all Australians, a remarkable woman who embodied heroic goodness and saintliness in an Australian way. She is a founder of Catholic social services in Australia. Denis Fitzgerald reflected on this in the following terms, when he welcomed Sr Josephine Dubiel and her colleagues from the Sisters of St Joseph to the recent CSSV Annual Dinner.

- It is a special pleasure to have you with us this evening, as the canonisation of Mary MacKillop approaches.





- Mary was a founder of Catholic social services in Australia, and she blazed a path across the country as she sought, as a follower of Christ, to identify with and to respond to the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of her time.
- She organised and inspired others to continue that work, and the Sisters of St Joseph are her heirs.
- But the rest of us are also her heirs: through the various apostolates of the Sisters, and through their work in promoting the cause and the life of Mary MacKillop, Mary's inspiration reaches out to all who seek to respond to the Gospel call to see the face of Christ in others.

To celebrate the canonisation, the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Sisters of St Joseph are hosting a celebration, ***Celebrating Australia's First Saint – Mary MacKillop***, in Fitzroy on 17 October. All are welcome. Details are available on the website at www.cam.org.au/mackillop

A display on Catholic social services on 17 October

Organisations are invited to set up a display as part of a festival that afternoon in the Exhibition Gardens, and many CSSV members will be invited to participate in that. CSSV will itself participate, to represent the sector as a whole, and those organisations that aren't separately represented. Please feel free to contact Terry O'Shannassy, on tel 9287 5570, on any aspect of this.

A reflection of Mary MacKillop's contribution to Catholic social services today

Plans are also underway for a seminar later in the year to reflect on Mary's contribution to Catholic social services and on what impact she might have today on the many people and organisations that are active in this field. Please contact Denis if you would like to contribute to this – dfitzgerald@css.org.au, tel 9287 5569.

“Rest for your Soul” - Weekend of spiritual renewal for women in Catholic social services

Date: 12 – 13 November 2010

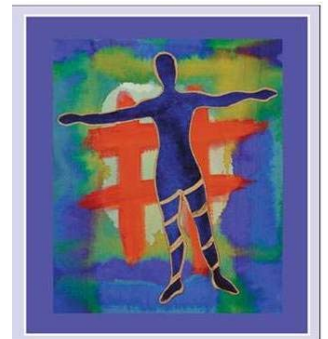
Venue: Janssen Spirituality Centre in Boronia

Starting time 5pm on Friday and ending 8pm on Saturday --> there is also the possibility to leave after breakfast on Sunday for those who wish to do so.

Come and take the time to rest from the business of 'doing' to the relaxation of 'being'. This will be special time in which our individual gifts are celebrated as well as exploring what underpins our inspiration for being women of courage and hope.

A flyer with further details and costing will be posted on our website soon. Places are limited so please register early.

Please contact Emmy on esilvius@css.org.au or 9287 5566 if you have any queries.



Advocacy

Criminal Justice – letter from Heads of Churches in Victoria

Criminal justice and community safety has long been a key area of concern for Catholic social services. There are a number of reasons for this, including

- the people involved, as victims of crime and as perpetrators, are often among the most marginalised in our society
- it is an area that has few supporters at the political level for an approach that respects the inherent dignity of each person, and has a focus not on justice alone, but on the common good
- if there is not a voice for those caught up in the system, the public and political debate tends to move towards the extreme, with a consequent adverse impact on true community safety.

On 6 August 2010 Victorian Church leaders sent an open letter on community safety to members of the Victorian Parliament. [Click here for a copy of that letter](#): The *Herald Sun* ran an article on the letter on 10 August - [click here to see the article](#).



The letter argues that, while prisons have their place, long term community safety will only be advanced if we intervene early to address the causes of crime, and if we work harder at rehabilitation, and re-engagement once people leave prison. This message is a counterbalance to the focus on imprisonment that features in much media and policy coverage of community safety.

CSSV currently chairs an InterChurch Criminal Justice Taskforce that advised the Church leaders in the preparation of that letter, and which managed subsequent media and political engagement. The letter itself drew on the experiences of a number of CSSV member organisations. We will continue to work on these issues and to advance them in the public arena as the Victorian election approaches. A network of Catholic agencies active in this area is also being re-established.

Aged Care

In late July CSSV lodged its submission to the current Productivity Commission enquiry into Caring for Older Australians – click here for a copy:

http://www.css.org.au/documents/CSSV_submission_to_PC_on_Aged_Care_July_2010.doc

The submission complements the analysis of Catholic Health Australia, and supports their objective, that all Australians, irrespective of socio-economic status, personal circumstances and location who are in need of aged care and support, have access to quality aged care services.

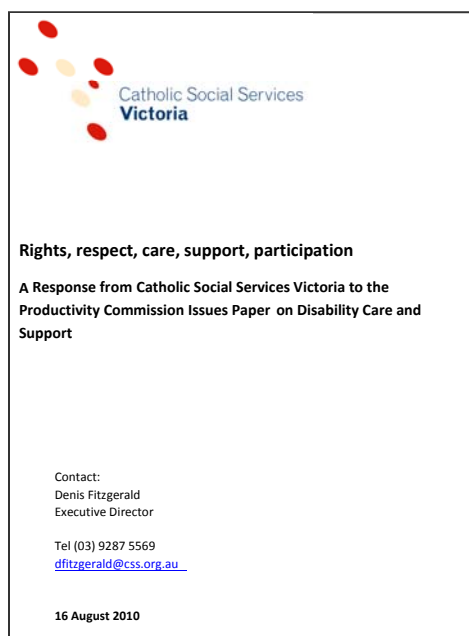
The focus of the submission is on the needs of people who have been homeless, or have other special needs. Current recurrent funding is not flexible enough to provide the care that is needed, and to fund the innovative services that are required to reach out to these vulnerable groups. Additional capital funding is urgently needed, as is recognition in the funding process of those organisations who have expertise and experience in working with people who are homeless.

A network group from larger and smaller Catholic aged care suppliers will meet soon to explore further the options for further collaboration within the Catholic sector to advance the residential and care options for this significant group of 'at risk' Australians.

Please also consider joining a number of our member organisations by signing up for 'Speak up for Older Australians' – click on the graphic below.



Disability Care and Support



On 16 August 2010 CSSV lodged its [submission on Disability Care and Support](#) to the enquiry by the Productivity Commission into a proposal for a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The submission was built on consultations with the Catholic social services community, including a workshop with carers. It strongly supported the concept of a national insurance scheme, with its key features of being consumer directed and responsive, that would address the needs of people with disabilities regardless of how their location or the cause of their disabilities, in the context of an efficient and viable framework for ongoing funding. The CSSV submission complements a submission to the enquiry by the Australian Bishops Conference.

Our response is based on a Gospel-inspired vision of integral human development that holds as fundamental the inherent dignity of all people, and from a focus on the common good – that no part of society can flourish if other parts of society are unable to achieve



their potential. It is fully aligned with the urgings of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

One of the points of emphasis of the CSSV submission is that reform needs to be underpinned by a strategy to enhance community attitudes toward the right to inclusion and support of people with disabilities and their families. In support of this, we will continue to work with stakeholders in this area to better inform ourselves, member organisations and other parts of the Church of the issues at stake, and of the need for broad understanding and support for the full participation in our society of people with disabilities.

Events

CSSV Annual Dinner

Around 200 people from member organisations and the broader Catholic social services community celebrated at our 2010 Annual Dinner on 20 August.

The dinner is an important date in our calendar, as it brings this broad community together to celebrate our work, and to strengthen the links between the various parts of the Church who are active in support of our broad community of service.



Bishops Peter Connors from Ballarat, Les Tomlinson from Melbourne and Hilton Deakin were able to join us as well many staff from member agencies and board members and volunteers. It was encouraging to see a couple of new groups in attendance including staff from St. John of God Accord. The presentation by Elizabeth Proust (pictured) on 'Building a mission focused organisation' was widely appreciated. Reflecting on her experience in a number of organisations, she offered the following advice on mission development:

- Engage your people – they know
- Keep it simple
- Make it meaningful for internal and external stakeholders
- Senior people have to live the values
- You can't outsource mission development

The atmosphere throughout the evening was a tribute to, as one participant put it, the very strong sense of community and being part of a big group of people committed to working together.

Thanks to our sponsors for their support on the evening - Australian Catholic University, Catholic Church Insurances, Catholic Development Fund, CDM Communications, Church Resources, Fuji Xerox, Marketing Connecting Networking, Master Care – [click here](#) for sponsor's graphics.

'Nurturing the Founding Spirit' symposium

On Thursday 8 July around 50 CSSV leaders and representatives from Religious Congregations met to reflect on strategies, achievements and challenges in working within an organisation to build on the spirit and charisma that inspired those who laid the foundations for today's programs.

Inspiring input from Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ, Sr Pam Molony RGS, Ms Julie Edwards, Sr Bernadette Keating PBVM and Mr Neal Murphy set the tone for the day. Extensive discussion and questions, including a series of workshops, complemented those initial sessions.





A report on the day is still in preparation, and will be circulated. One outcome from the day is the establishment of an occasional network grouping of people responsible for mission and ethos within Catholic social services agencies – contact Denis (Dfitzgerald@css.org.au, tel 9287 5569) for more information. A further symposium is also indicated, for early 2011.

Breakfast Briefing and Workshop with Jacqui Remond from Catholic Earthcare



On 15 July Jacqui Remond – National Director of Catholic Earthcare Australia - hosted our breakfast which was followed by a workshop. The breakfast topic was *Protection and Care for our Environment – A challenging focus of Catholic social teaching*. Pope John Paul II's World Day of Peace message: "If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation" teaches us that integral human development is linked with the obligations which flow from human relationships with the natural environment. [Click here](#) for the PowerPoint presentation.

The theme of the workshop that followed was *Towards a sustainable world – starting with ourselves*. The intention of this workshop was to help organisations and individuals to become sustainable using Catholic Earthcare's new ASSISI initiative. During this three hour event Jacqui encouraged the participants to



explore their relationship with God's creation and ask themselves how they can contribute to its care. Some principals of Catholic social teaching, such as the Dignity of the human person, the Common good, Subsidiarity and Solidarity were linked with care for our creation. A presentation was also given on the Ecological Footprint Tool (ECIS). This tool measures, tracks and develops reports on the organisations ecological footprint, which would also be useful for schools. [Click here](#) for the PowerPoint used at this presentation. Further information can be obtained from <http://www.catholicearthcare.org.au>

Around the Sector

St. Mary's House of Welcome featured on new Archdiocesan Website

The Melbourne Archdiocese this week launched a new web site prepared by Catholic Communications, who are to be congratulated on their work. CSSV have contributed to this development by arranging for the communications team to visit and interview member agencies to enable the daily work of the Church to be better showcased. St. Mary's House of welcome is featured on the new site with CEO Tony McCosker presenting a good picture of a vibrant centre actively engaging with the lives of many people living on the margins.

Catholic Communications are keen to develop a library of video clips of the ministry of a wide range of agencies, and CSSV would be pleased to hear from any member keen to be involved. Have a look at the [new web site](#) as to how this service might help publicise your work to a new and broader audience.

Contact Terry O'Shannassy on 9287 5570 if you would like to be part of this promotion

Annual Cycle against the Traffik - 3 to 18 September

The Cycle Against The Traffik TOUR 2010, from Sydney to Melbourne aims to spread awareness in the towns along the tour route about slavery and human trafficking and involve as many people as possible in the ongoing fight to eradicate slavery in our world. The organisers have chosen a shelter in Malaysia run by the community organisation Tenaganita to receive any funds raised by the ride. The shelter helps support women who formerly have been trafficked and held as slaves. To find out more about the tour and how you can support or participate visit: <http://www.cycleagainstthetraffik.com/>



Social Justice Sunday 26 September

In this year's Social Justice Sunday Statement called *Violence in Australia: A Message of Peace*, the Catholic Bishops of Australia address the anger and violence in our society, and the effects on individuals, families and the community as a whole. Peace and peace-building go beyond the absence of conflict. They are positive constructive ways of living that require constant nurturing, and reflect the sacredness that is in the deepest part of our being. For further details visit the Australian Catholic Social Justice website (www.acsjc.org.au)



Centacare's Concert Sunday 3 October, 2.30pm

Featuring Mark Vincent, Alana Conway and Deacon Robert Galea

Centacare Catholic Family Services is delighted to present their **Concert in the Cathedral** at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne.

This year, Centacare is celebrating 75 years of service to the Victorian community and we are very excited to announce Mark Vincent (Channel 7's 2009 Australia's Got Talent Winner) and Alana Conway (2010 Finalist) as the headline acts. For further information go to <http://www.centacaremelbourne.org>

Anti Poverty Week 17 – 23 October

The Week focuses on poverty around the world. Its main aims are to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and within Australia; encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments.

Interest has been growing steadily in Australia in recent years and activities such as public lectures, workshops, conferences, debates, concerts, displays, sports days, media briefings and other events have been organised.

Organisers of events are encouraged to provide details of their plans for posting on the special website, www.antipovertyweek.org.au, in order to encourage participation and stimulate action by other people. The website also includes basic fact sheets, promotional material and links to sources of information and ideas.



Who am I?

Michael Perusco – CEO Sacred Heart Mission in St Kilda

Tell us about where you work and your role

I am CEO at Sacred Heart Mission (SHM) and have been in this role for the last 7 years. SHM employees about 180 staff, has over 500 regular volunteers and has a range of services focussed on people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. These include residential aged care, community aged care, meals programs, supported accommodation and a range of health services. We are also undertaking a pilot project, A Journey to Social Inclusion which is working with 40 people who are chronically homeless over the next 3 years to demonstrate that it is possible to end the cycle of homeless.

SHM was founded by Fr Ernie Smith and grew out of the local Parish of St Kilda West and is a wonderful example of faith in action. Our relationship with the Parish remains fundamental to our work and Fr John Petrusis and his team provide significant support to the people who use our services.



What do you do to wind down or relax?

I have 2 young children – 2 ½ years and 8 months – so most of my time outside of work is taken up with all that this involves.



Have you a particular role model?

I don't have one role model but there are many people that I respect and admire for the work they have done.

Prof Patrick McGorry is an example of a very powerful advocate who is committed to the work that he does. He has dedicated his life to improving the mental health of young people and he is using his Australian of the Year status to its utmost advantage.

Author of *Growth Fetish* and *Affluenza* and social commenter, Clive Hamilton is another. He challenges us to think about the way in which we live and the consequences of that - Why is economic growth considered so important and held up as the only measure of success of a country? What are the alternatives? What impact does it have on people who are disadvantaged?

We are living in an increasingly materialistic and individualistic society and we must have the courage to say "enough is enough" and do something about it.

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

Australia is in the midst of a housing affordability crisis. The Federal Governments recent investment in public and community housing was fantastic and must be seen as a first step. Both sides of politics, at the state and federal level, must commit to a 10 year plan to increase public and community housing to ensure it remains a key plank of our housing market.

Contact us

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

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