

Catholic Social Services Victoria – Benefits of Membership

Established 25 years ago, Catholic Social Services Victoria is auspiced by the Bishops of Victoria and by its members to operate as a peak body for Catholic social services agencies within the state.

Our mission is to advance the mission of the Church in the provision of services to the community and in associated work for justice. We do this in consultation with our members, and with their assistance; and under the guidance of the CSSV Council.

As a member based organisation, we aim is to add value to the work of individual members, in the following areas:

Advocacy: CSSV works to impact on public policy and popular awareness on a range of service and justice issues, primarily relating to the work and interests of our members. Our activities include

- Dialogue with Government, officials and Parliamentarians on policy issues
- Submissions on public policy matters to enquiries, etc
- Information to develop understanding and action in the Catholic community and beyond

Member support: we work with members to build a community of mutual identity and support within the Catholic social services sector. This involves gatherings such as our Annual Mass and Annual Dinner, regular visits to members, and briefings on a range of issues of common interest.

Working groups and consultations on advocacy issues are also important: a working group on disability to advise on a submission to the current Productivity Commission enquiry is currently being formed.

Promotion of cooperation between members is part of this general area – promoting a coordinated response to post-bushfire assistance, and facilitation of closer cooperation between Centacares are examples here - and, for smaller agencies, member support involved advice on a range of corporate issues.

Building on our relations with members, CSSV advises the Bishops and others on policy and practical issues in community services, and promote the sector to the broader Catholic community.

Representation of members through our active membership of VCOSS, our Chairmanship of the Social Questions Commission of the Victorian Council of Churches, and other representative groups on problem gambling, criminal justice etc.

Catholic identity: we support members in reflection and building on their Catholic identity, to further advance our collective mission of service and justice. Our work program in this area includes papers, workshops for members, and information on relevant material. This objective also impacts on our agenda under Advocacy and Member support.

Witnessing in word and deed to the Catholic Social Teaching values that should animate our ministry, and promoting this teaching to agency Boards and Managers

Many of these benefits can be obtained without formal membership - our mandate is not limited only to members, and we seek to work with the whole sector.

Formal membership, however,

- is an expression of support for our mission
- enables involvement in all of our briefings, consultations, etc and participation in advocacy delegations
- enables an organisation and its personnel to contribute to governance and direction; and to more systematically be involved and informed of particular activities, etc; and,
- through payment of membership fees and the addition of the organisations name to our membership list, your membership strengthens our ability to contribute with and on behalf of the sector in each of the three main areas of endeavour.