



mini MICAH – August 2009

Monthly update for members and friends of Catholic Social Services Victoria

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For your diary.

- ✚ **Fri 28 August 2009 - CSSV Annual Dinner**
San Remo Ballroom, North Carlton
After Dinner Speaker: Julian McMahon, barrister and human rights advocate
Enquiries to Emmy Silvius, Tel 9287 5566, esilvius@css.org.au
- ✚ **Wed 9 September 2009 – CSSV Breakfast Briefing, 7.30 – 8.45am**
Topic: **Relevance of the new encyclical for social services**
RSVP by Thursday 3 September to Emmy Silvius, tel 9287 5566, esilvius@css.org.au
- ✚ **Further details below for the following events:**
 - 30 August – **Refugee and Migrant Sunday**
 - 11 – 17 October, 2009 - **Anti-Poverty week**
 - 13 – 15 November, 2009 – **CSSV Women's Retreat**
 - Thurs 11 March 2010, 4.30pm - **2010 CSSV Commissioning Mass and Annual General meeting**

Who am I?

- ✚ **May Johnston** from St Vincent de Paul Society



CSSV News & Development

Fr Tony Kerin appointed Episcopal Vicar for Justice and Social Service in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

Congratulations to Fr Tony (photo at right) on this appointment, as we welcome him to this important role for Catholic social services in Melbourne.

An Episcopal Vicar acts for the Bishop or Archbishop in the area of their appointment, so Fr Tony will be a vital part of the sector, particularly in the Melbourne Archdiocese.

Fr Tony was ordained priest in 1977, and has been an active contributor to the people of Melbourne and beyond in a range of pastoral and associated administrative roles.

For the past six years, Tony has been Parish Priest of St Martin de Porres Parish, Avondale Heights, which publicly aspires to be "the world's most livable Parish". St Martin's is a large parish with a vibrant mix of cultural backgrounds, to the west of Melbourne.

Tony has extensive involvement in marriage education. Among other things, he is a former President of the Catholic Society for Marriage Education, and a former and long standing Board member of International Catholic Engaged Encounter.

With postgraduate qualifications in Canon Law from the Gregorian University in Rome, Fr Tony has been a judge of the Tribunal of the Catholic Church for Victoria and Tasmania, and retains active roles as advocate and official in various canon law areas. He is an Adjunct Lecturer in Canon Law and Marriage Education in the John Paul II Institute in Melbourne.

CSSV looks forward to working with Fr Tony, as he looks forward to meeting many of the people involved in the sector, and to more deeply engage with the pressing issues of the moment, as part of the Church's broad mission of justice and service.

Bishop Christopher Prowse is Fr Tony's immediate predecessor in this role. On 15 July, Bishop Chris was installed as the Bishop of Sale, in eastern Victoria. In this role he will continue his responsibility for the Church's work of justice and compassion, but with a focus on his new Diocese. This will involve direct responsibility for Centacare Gippsland, and continued involvement with the range of CSSV members that have operations in the Sale Diocese. It will also involve continued responsibility for CSSV, as one of the auspicating bishops.

CSSV Annual Dinner to recognise leaders in Catholic social services

The 2009 CSSV Annual Dinner will provide an occasion for the awarding of Life Membership to Fr Kevin Mogg, who was a leader in the sector for 25 years and founded CSSV. It will also provide an opportunity to farewell and recognise the noteworthy contributions to the Victorian community by Bishop Chris Prowse, Paul Linossier, Michael Yore, Helen McPhee and others who are moving on to contribute to the common good in new ways.

CSSV Women's Retreat - Warburton, 13 - 15 November, 2009

Plans are in train for a weekend away for women in the Catholic social service community who want to take **time out, slow down, reflect and refresh**. The retreat will be held at the Warburton Lodge, with Carole Carmody rsm facilitating. The cost for twin share accommodation is \$260pp, or \$340pp for a single room. Click here for a flyer: http://www.css.org.au/documents/Flyerv2-df_000.pdf. Comments or expressions of interest are now invited – contact Denis on (03) 9287 5569 or dfitzgerald@css.org.au

Homelessness: review of Supported Accommodation Assistance Act

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth has called for submissions for its inquiry into homelessness legislation, which governs payments to the States for homelessness initiatives. Terms of reference are on the web:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fchy/homelessness/tor.htm>





A number of members are gathering at CSSV on Monday 10 August at 10.00am to share ideas for a submission to that review. Please feel free to contact Denis for details, or to send in any ideas you would like to have incorporated into a response.

Also expected soon in this general space is the Victorian Government's homelessness strategy – a well-attended forum on Friday 31 July channelled lots of ideas for the strategy into the Government, and provided an opportunity for many in the sector to express their frustration that the needed level of program support and housing stock is still not being made available.



✚ 9 Sept breakfast –Encyclical 'Love in Truth' with Fr Bruce Duncan CSsR

The next CSSV Breakfast Briefing will focus on Pope Benedict XVI's latest encyclical, 'Love in Truth'. Fr Bruce Duncan, known to many for his deep expertise in the social teaching of the Church, will provide an outline of the relevance of the submission to the work of Catholic social service agencies. Click here for flyer:

http://www.css.org.au/documents/Sep_09_flyer.pdf

Sandy Cornish, Director of ACSJC has written that "Unpacking the meaning and significance of Benedict XVI's first social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* will take some time and effort."

Bruce's Breakfast Briefing should accelerate us along that path of 'unpacking'. Another useful lead in is the 'discussion guide' available on the website of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council:

http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/publications/positionPapers/positionPapers_13_07_09.html

✚ Equal Opportunity Act 1995 – Catholic social services and freedom of religion:

On 5 August 2009 Catholic Social Services appeared before the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee of the Victorian Parliament to speak to its submission on the interplay between the provision of Catholic social services and freedom of religion. For introductory comments see:

<http://www.css.org.au/documents/Openingcommentsto5Aug09SARChearings.doc>

The submission was a contribution to an enquiry into exceptions and exemptions in the *Equal Opportunity Act* 1995 (Vic.) CSSV had earlier presented a written submission to the Review: see

http://css.org.au/documents/CSSVEqualOpportunitySubmissionJuly09_001.pdf . During the public hearings, Denis Fitzgerald, Executive Director of CSSV, summarised the submission along the following lines:

- Freedom of religion is an important plank in the broad human rights agenda.
- Catholic social service agencies need to be able to take religious commitments and beliefs into account in their staffing decisions; and to deliver services in accordance with the requirements of Catholic teaching.
- These freedoms are necessary for the Catholic Church and community, through Catholic agencies, to continue in the provision of their wide range of social services and support for the general community.
- This freedom of religion would not be impaired by some narrowing of existing exemptions.

The Catholic Bishops of Victoria have also published a pastoral letter on the broader issue of freedom of religion generally in Victoria. Entitled 'Threat to Religious Freedom', the text of the letter is available on the Archdiocesan website <http://www.cam.org.au>

✚ CSSV Council news

The next meeting of the CSSV Council is on 14 August – see www.css.org.au for details of Council members.

The Council and its Research, Policy and Advocacy Committee have endorsed the development of a 'Victorian Political Forum', for late November 2009, to provide an opportunity for members to exchange views with members of the Government and of the Opposition. Development of this event is underway.

The Catholic Ethos Committee of Council also meets on 14 August.

✚ Report on 22 July Breakfast Briefing – Post-bushfire reconstruction

Thanks to Janet Cribbes of Centacare Catholic Family Services for an informative update over breakfast on 22 July 2009 on the Church's efforts in post-bushfire community rebuilding. Click here for a short report.

<http://www.css.org.au/documents/ArticlereBreakfastsession22July2009-Bushfirerecovery.doc>



Around the Sector



Proposal for portable Long Service Leave

CSSV members and VCOSS members would be aware of a proposal from the Victorian Government for the introduction of a compulsory scheme to provide portable long service leave across the Victorian community sector agencies. Members would also be aware of the broad support for the underlying rationale of this proposal, and of the practical difficulties that have been identified with the current model. Please feel free to contact Denis for more information/ discussion etc on this issue: tel 9287 5569, dfitzgerald@css.org.au



Modernisation of SACS Award

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission held public consultations in Melbourne this week in relation to the forthcoming modernisation of the SACS award, which, among other things, will become an Australia wide award.

The AIRC website contains lots of documents on this process. The ASU submission and a submission by NSW Catholic employers give a sense of the issues at play. An exposure draft from the Commission is due by 25 September, with comments then due to the Commission by 16 October.

There are some big issues at stake here, not least around the level of wages that could be set in the new award. At the CSSA conference last year and in discussions by CSSV Council, there has been significant support for increases in wage levels, coupled with the need for Governments to fund the increased costs. The NSW Catholic submission stressed the importance of a phasing in of any significant increase. Consultation draft is expected to be available.

For information at this stage:

<http://www.airc.gov.au/awardmod/fullbench/industries/awardmodindustry.cfm?award=social>



Sacred heart Mission – Journey to Social Inclusion

On July 16 Sacred Heart Mission launched their new 'Journey 2 Social Inclusion' (J2SI) project to tackle chronic homelessness. Three years in the making, the project will provide intensive case management, therapy, mentoring and skills development to enable those trapped in chronic homelessness to exit to a more normal life. Detailed planning, training of new staff and the accumulation of \$3 million from a wide range of state, local, philanthropic and private funds has enabled the project to begin. The Premier, John Brumby, Housing Minister Richard Wynne and Lord Mayor Robert Doyle attended the function. Congratulations to Michael Perusco, his Board and team members on a truly groundbreaking initiative.



Project Dreaming Tracks - Arts funding

The Project Dreaming Tracks team are celebrating the announcement of a \$4,400 grant from Darebin Council to enable the expansion of their candle making and art projects. A small agency with limited funding, they offer disabled persons and indigenous clients in the Preston / Reservoir area a range of programs and services.



Recovery Newsletter

This is a newsletter of the Catholic dioceses of Victoria. The aim is to inform readers of how the proceeds from the Catholic Archbishop's Charitable Fund Bushfire Appeal are being spent as well as supply specific information regarding support given to victims of the Victorian bushfires. Click on the icon to view the newsletter.



New Website for Good Grief

The Sisters of St Joseph have recently launched a new website for their company, Good Grief, which supports people, especially children, in times of loss or change or grief. The organisation's work is based on Blessed Mary MacKillop's principle "Never see a need without doing something about it."

The site has many programs and resources developed to support all members of the community to develop the skills and resilience to adjust to significant life events and to grow from the experience. www.goodgrief.org.au



Micah Challenge – Offering of Letters to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd



Micah Challenge is a global campaign of Christians speaking out against poverty and injustice. The campaign is currently calling Christians all over Australia to pick up their pens to fight poverty. The 'Offering of Letters' campaign asks churches and other Christian groups to prayerfully write a letter to the Prime Minister calling for generosity and justice for 1.2 billion people who live in extreme poverty. The letters will be delivered to Mr. Rudd during the Micah Challenge national gathering, 'Voices for Justice', in September.

See www.micahchallenge.org.au/offering-of-letters for information kits and further details.

Letters are due by the end of August and can be mailed to
Micah Challenge Australia, c/o Locked Bag 122, Frenchs Forest NSW 2086

For your diary

Fri 28 August 2009 - CSSV Annual Dinner

San Remo Ballroom, North Carlton

After Dinner Speaker: **Julian McMahon, barrister and human rights advocate**

Enquiries to Emmy Silvius, Tel 9287 5566, esilvius@css.org.au

A copy of the brochure can be obtained from <http://www.css.org.au/documents/Pdfflyer.pdf>

Sun 30 August 2009 - Refugee and Migrant Sunday



Refugee and Migrant Sunday is a celebration of the dignity of people who are refugees and migrants and the contribution they have made to life in Australia. It is celebrated by the Churches together on or around 30 August 2009.

Refugee and Migrant Sunday Resources for 2009 have been gathered for use in churches, schools and the wider community by Working Parties of SA Council of Churches as part of Act for Peace: the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) www.actforpeace.org.au

Wed 9 September 2009 - CSSV Breakfast Briefing

7.30 – 8.45am, Cardinal Knox Centre, East Melbourne

Speaker – Fr Bruce Duncan CSsR on Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical 'Charity in Truth'

See Flyer on our website http://www.css.org.au/documents/Sep_09_flyer.pdf

A donation to cover expenses will be appreciated

11 – 17 October 2009 - Anti-Poverty week

Organise your event for the week, and record it on www.antipovertyweek.org.au to help give the Anti Poverty initiative publicity and momentum



13 – 15 November 2009 – CSSV Women's Retreat

Warburton Lodge, 18 Park Road, Warburton Vic 3799

Facilitator: Carole Carmody rsm

Click here for a flyer: http://www.css.org.au/documents/Flyerv2-df_000.pdf.

Expressions of interest are now invited – Denis on (03) 9287 5569 or dfitzgerald@css.org.au

Thurs 11 March 2010 - CSSV Commissioning Mass and Annual General meeting

All Saints Church and Hall, Nth Carlton, followed by supper at St Mary's House of Welcome, 165 Brunswick St, Fitzroy. Enquiries to Emmy Silvius, Tel 9287 5566, esilvius@css.org.au



Who am I?

May Mauseth Johnston from St Vincent de Paul Society

May is Project manager for Customer Protections and Smart Meters Project



Q: Tell us about where you work and your role

I'm currently doing a research and advocacy project for the St Vincent de Paul Society looking at energy customer protections in light of smart meters. It might sound quite technical, but there are major changes happening to the energy sector at the moment that will impact on households' energy bills and their rights when dealing with privatised energy companies. It is therefore important that the interests of households, and especially the disadvantaged and vulnerable, are heard to ensure that everyone has access to affordable essential services.

Advocacy in the area of essential services is important because of the detrimental impact on people threatened with or experiencing disconnection from services most of just take for granted.

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

To not lose focus of the real issues and always remember who we are here to represent. Working in advocacy on complex issues can sometimes mean that you get bogged down in details or the broader politics of what you're working on. I've found the advice to take a step back and reassess your work at regular intervals is important in order to prioritise and get results.

Q: What do you do to wind down or relax?

On a day-to-day basis, I find physical activity, such as going for a run, a great way to wind down after work. If I'm feeling lazy, the cinema is always a stimulating place to relax for a couple of hours. When I have more time on my hands, I prefer to leave the city to go camping or cross-country skiing.

Q: Have you a particular role model?

No, but I try to look to and learn from positive people. People who have the ability to look for solutions rather than dwell on problems - and I'm fortunate enough to know such people, both personally and professionally. I have a lot of respect for people who don't brush challenges away by simply placing them in the too hard basket.

Q: If there is one thing you could change in the world today what would that be?

An issue close to my heart is the growing inequality between people in our community combined with the lack of opportunities for the low-income and disadvantaged. If I could change something tomorrow, I would start with decreasing the gap between the rich and the poor and ensure that people are not excluded from life's opportunities due to income, postcode, race or cultural background.

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 – we are keen to keep in touch with developments, and to assist with publicity etc where that is appropriate.

Catholic Social Services Victoria

383 Albert St (PO Box 146) East Melbourne Vic 3002 03 9287 5566

<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 (Terry is on leave until 19 August)</p>	<p><i>Emmy Silvius</i> Office Administrator esilvius@css.org.au 9287 5566</p>
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To nominate new subscribers or to unsubscribe to mini MICAH, email esilvius@css.org.au.