

# The Catholic Social Services Australia Network

Catholic Social Services Australia's (CSSA) vision is for a compassionate and just Australia, a place where all people are treated with respect and have the opportunity to fully participate and contribute to society and live a dignified, healthy and meaningful life.

We look to our elected representatives to prioritise people experiencing poverty and vulnerability, through the development and implementation of social and economic policies that increase opportunities for all people to realise their potential.

## Income to live

Having an adequate income to live is essential for leading a life of dignity and to enable people to access social and economic opportunities. We ask for:

1. An Independent Commission to be established to advise Government on the appropriate level of welfare payments<sup>1</sup>. Poverty is growing in Australia with an estimated 2.5 million people or 13.9% of all people living below the internationally accepted poverty line<sup>2</sup>. The current level of welfare payments to individuals and families is inadequate and is set and adjusted by Government based on budgetary priorities rather than evidence based need; and
2. Government to undertake and make public modelling on the social and economic impacts on individuals and families for all new legislation. This will allow greater transparency on the impacts arising from proposed legislation.

## Secure and affordable housing

More than 100,000 people were homeless at the last Census and rents remain unaffordable for many people, especially those on welfare payments<sup>3</sup>. A home provides stability, privacy and security that can support meaningful participation in the community, education, the job market and social networks. We ask for:

1. The adoption of a national housing strategy that commits all governments to devise appropriate mechanisms to increase the supply of affordable housing and address homelessness; and
2. Continue the National Affordable Housing Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness including the establishment of funding mechanisms that increase the supply of affordable and social housing.

## Refugees and asylum seekers

Some of the most vulnerable people are those seeking refuge and asylum. CSSA believes that people who seek asylum should generally live in the community. Detention should be used only for necessary processing or when ordered by the Courts. Accordingly we ask that:

1. No children be in detention centres on or off shore, and that unaccompanied children be in the care and protection of an independent guardian. Children must have access to education and medical services to support their social and mental health; and
2. Asylum seekers living in Australia waiting for their protection claims to be resolved need to be able to work, access education and other health, community services and financial support. There are 29,008 people (including 3,979 children)<sup>4</sup> who have been permitted to live in the community on Bridging Visas but have been left in limbo with unresolved protection claims. These people also need their situation resolved in a fair and timely manner rather than face the current protracted situation.

1. CSSA 2008 An Australian Entitlements Commission  
2. ACOSS 2014 Poverty in Australia Report  
3. Anglicare Australia 2015 Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot  
4. As at November 2015 - Australian Human Rights Commission

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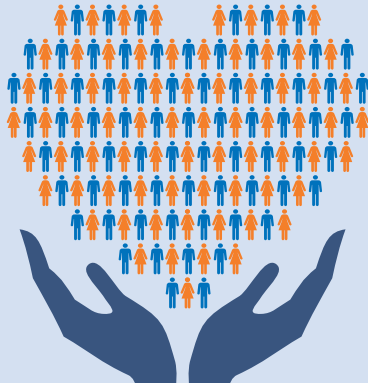
CSSA  
NETWORK

## Our network is extensive

The CSSA network is comprised of **56 organisations**, delivering services from **more than 650 sites** across Australia



CLIENTS



## We help hundreds of thousands of people

Our social services network **directly assists** close to **450,000 people** each year

STAFF

## We employ thousands of staff

The CSSA network employs **more than 14,400 staff**



VOLUNTEERS

## We harness community support

The network benefits from **more than 5,900 volunteers** donating **hundreds of thousands of hours** of their time

