

## Catholic Social Services Australia Strategic Intent

### Our Strategic Intent 2018-2021

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) is the Catholic Church's peak body for social services. We rigorously research, challenge and advocate for a fair and just society that serves all Australians.

Everything we do is guided by the mission of the Catholic Church, and the teachings of Jesus who asks us to continually respond to people living on the margins.

### Our Value Proposition

As a national advocate, CSSA works with its members to produce evidence/research which informs public opinion and assists lawmakers to develop just and compassionate social and economic policies that will improve the lives of vulnerable and marginalised people in Australia. In doing so, CSSA fosters connectedness and partners with Catholic social services providers.

In essence, CSSA will:

- do national advocacy
- produce evidence-based research
- foster connectedness with its members

### Our Vision

A fair and just Australian society that is inclusive, equitable and responsive.

### Our Mission

To alleviate economic and social hardship for vulnerable and marginalised people by creating innovative and credible solutions for change while amplifying the voice, influence and lived experience of Catholic Social Services.

### Our Values

- **Compassion** - Our care and concern for all, particularly vulnerable and marginalised people, guides all our actions and decisions.
- **Collaboration** - When we collaborate and partner with others, we increase our reach, widen our influence and deepen our impact.
- **Excellence** - In all our work we strive for quality, professionalism and continuous improvement.
- **Accountability** - We are honest, open and direct in all that we do and say.
- **Innovation** - Always willing to take risks, we respectfully challenge the status quo to achieve positive change.

## The Way we Work

Working alongside our members and in partnership with others, CSSA uses rigorous research, backed up by expert analysis to access and influence key decision makers, raise awareness and advocate for policy change and reform in support of our ultimate mission: to create a fairer society for all.

Our strength lies in our ability to influence those in power of the need to create a society that works for all Australians and work with them to make it a reality. A society that supports the dignity, equality and participation of all people.

Catholic Social Services Australia draws on the experience of decades of Catholic social service and social policy development in Australia. It also serves the Bishops of Australia, Leaders of Religious Institutes, Catholic social services organisations and the broader Church community in advancing the social services ministry of the Catholic Church.

## Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

In pursuit of its mission, Catholic Social Services Australia embodies and promotes the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching. They reflect who we are and how we work.

- **Preferential Option for the Poor**  
The needs of socially disadvantaged and vulnerable people and communities are our deepest concern and priority.
- **Human dignity**  
We recognise the sacredness of life and that every person has inherent dignity and worth. Our human rights and responsibilities are founded in this essential, shared human dignity.
- **The common good**  
We have responsibility for one another in our life together, and are called to work for the common good of all. We must advocate for a just society in which all people, particularly the vulnerable and marginalised, are able to flourish and meet their needs.
- **Solidarity**  
Humans are social by nature and depend on one another. We seek to stand in unity with each other, particularly those who are powerless or disadvantaged, and recognise each persons' rights regardless of our differences.
- **Subsidiarity**  
The capacity and capabilities of people and communities ought to be respected, with decisions made at the lowest local level possible. Everyone should have the opportunity to participate in and contribute to decision processes that closely affect them.

## Strategic Priorities

- 1) To advocate with a distinctive Catholic voice for all people who are poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged, particularly children, young people, families and Indigenous people, by:**
  - 1.1 Influencing public policy and legislation through engagement with decision-makers using sound evidence based in research and the lived experience of Catholic social service providers;
  - 1.2 Campaigning for social justice;
  - 1.3 Speaking out with the most disadvantaged in all aspects of our work;
  - 1.4 Drawing on Catholic Social Teaching principles to frame and guide our work.
- 2) To develop and strengthen the Catholic social services sector in Australia through:**
  - 2.1 Supporting the sustainability of member agencies by fostering a network-wide culture of collaboration, connectedness, mutual support and trust;
  - 2.2 Facilitating opportunities for member engagement in relevant national policy, research and practice developments
- 3) Reflecting and celebrating the Catholic Church's mission of charity and social justice, including by:**
  - 3.1 Fostering Catholic identity and mission among Member Agencies;
  - 3.2 Facilitating pathways and programs for leadership development and mission formation in Catholic identity and mission across the Catholic Social Services Australia network;
  - 3.3 Ensuring constructive links with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia and other organisations of the Catholic Church;
  - 3.4 Developing alliances and partnerships with other agencies in order to further our social service ministries.
- 4) Ensuring the capacity and sustainability of the Catholic Social Services Australia to deliver the strategic priorities, through:**
  - 4.1 Provision of a sound funding base;
  - 4.2 Skilled and mission-focused Board and staff;
  - 4.3 Effective administrative and communications strategies and systems.