



Catholic Social
Services Australia

Annual Report

2019–20



We envisage
a fairer, more
inclusive Australian
society that reflects
and supports the
dignity, equality
and participation
of all people.



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About Us

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) is the Catholic Church's national peak body for its social services ministry.

It draws on the experience of decades of Catholic social service and social policy development in Australia. We work with Governments, the Bishops of Australia, leaders of religious institutes, Catholic social service organisations, and the broader Church community in advancing the social service ministry of the Church. We collaborate with our fellow agencies; Caritas, Catholic Health Australia, the National Catholic Education Commission, the St Vincent de Paul Society and all people of goodwill.

As an organisation we work to five key values; compassion, collaboration, excellence, accountability and innovation.

We are Australia's national network of community based Catholic social service organisations, and for over sixty years we have supported our members in providing social services to, and advocacy for those most in need.

Our service to the community is non-discriminatory and inclusive regardless of sexuality, race, religion or marital status.

Our Vision

We envisage a fairer, more inclusive Australian society that reflects and supports the dignity, equality and participation of all people.

Our Mission

CSSA advances the social services ministry which is integral to the mission of the Catholic Church in Australia to promote a fairer, more equitable society that preferentially assists those people most in need.

Catholic Social Teaching

In pursuing our mission, we seek to embody and promote the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

- **Dignity of the person**

Our vision for society springs from an understanding of the fundamental dignity, sanctity and worth of every human life.

- **Common good and community**

People are fundamentally social beings, and how we organise socially, politically and economically has implications for our capacity to grow in community.

- **Preferential option for the poor**

The most important measure of the success of our community is the manner in which we direct our resources to assist those people most in need.

- **Rights and responsibilities**

Our participation in community brings with it both a range of rights and protections and a range of duties and obligations.

Acknowledgement of Country

Catholic Social Services Australia acknowledges that our community ministries are built on the traditional lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging. We commit to working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners in a spirit of reconciliation, especially by providing community services. We renew our pledge to walk the journey of learning and healing together.

As an organisation we work to five key values; compassion, collaboration, excellence, accountability and innovation.



Chair's Message



Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) is a national organisation supporting multiple services across a wide variety of areas of work. For me, it embodies the image of open arms everywhere—represented by our valiant members who have not retreated one centimetre during the additional challenges all of us have recently faced.

At the centre of the large body of CSSA is a very small but strong and pulsating heart which has, for the last year, been energised and sustained by just three valiant people. On behalf of the board, members and the people we all serve, I offer our thanks and gratitude to Ursula Stephens, Joe Zabar and Mary Jamieson who have managed all the organisational, interorganisational, political, personal and financial challenges with grace, wit and wisdom. We will never fully understand the extraordinary amount of work, national and international negotiations and mediations that went this year into establishing Catholic Emergency Relief Australia (CERA); the new Catholic social services communication platform for our members; finessing and finalising the robust poverty research data platform, and negotiating the legalities of our new legal entity—amongst so many other matters. Thank you all. Of course, we also thank Dr Brenton Prosser, former Director of Research, for his foundational research that has prepared us well for the work ahead.

This recent time since March 2020 has been one that has hurled us into reflective spaces we could never have imagined. In the earlier periods of drought, floods, fire, and now the ongoing pandemic and floods again, it is hard to recall, let alone underscore the CSSA challenges and successes of earlier last year. On reflection, the single most important challenge has been to stay focused on our service mission while managing the multitude of personal fears and insecurities that confront us as vulnerable human beings ourselves. It is testimony to the strength of our values and beliefs that we have succeeded in supporting each other to be able to fulfill our ongoing mission of service—a mission the worth of which is even more palpably important at times of human disaster.

What brings us together at times like this is above all else, the sustaining and energising belief in the dignity and need of every individual, alongside the knowledge of the vital importance of love and relationship. This period has highlighted for me as few others have done, the significance of community, of community spirit, collective action, generosity of spirit and service. Littering the numerous commentaries over these months have been remarkable stories of community spirit, neighbourliness, compassion and resilience. While so much suffering continues unabated, the salves for suffering sit so often in the comforting presence of family, friends, and compassionate strangers.

COVID-19 is the second pandemic, the first pandemic is poverty

Everyone within the world of community services is aware that love, care and compassion are essential elements of our human journey. We also know they are not sufficient if we are to progress the mission, we all share for a more just world order. COVID-19 has thrown into sharp focus the gross injustices with which we are all too familiar. Somewhere recently I read a confronting and provocative phrase, *“COVID-19 is the second pandemic, the first pandemic is poverty”*. There is no doubt that the pandemic has picked out the most vulnerable, increased their numbers and reminded us of our own vulnerabilities. At this time, it is as important as ever to keep battling for the ‘common good’, in a different ‘normal’ and take every opportunity to keep fighting the injustices of poverty, racism, sexism, homelessness and power corruption.

All our services continue to join in spirit and action in the fight for justice of our Indigenous brothers and sisters so powerfully now linked to the international movement of Black Lives Matter. At an international level, it is important we continue to acknowledge the sustainable development goals of the United Nations. “Ending poverty and hunger, good health and education, clean water and sanitation, affordable clean energy and reducing global warming, reducing inequality, liveable cities and resilient infrastructure”. There is no time like the present to care for and sustain each other in our shared commitment to the image of the world so exquisitely presented in *Laudato Si’*:

“An integral ecology is made up of the simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness”

As I complete my final term plus one year with CSSA, I thank all who have entrusted me with this role and who have continued to trust during so many upheavals. My personal thanks go to all board members for your unfailing support this year while you have managed your own organisations and trials. As we move into a new era for CSSA as a Company Ltd I also welcome our newest member, Anita Veivers, Centacare FNQ, who replaced outgoing Director, Michael King, Centacare, Kimberley. Michael brought great experience to our Board and the perspective of remote services, fostering stronger Indigenous leadership within his team and celebrating diversity in all its forms.

I anticipate with excitement the nomination of the next CSSA Chair who will be selected under the new requirements embedded in our new Constitution. There is much work to keep doing right now to support each other and ensure the continuation of vital, restorative, and healing services during this pandemic. There is much work to do together as we continue to discern how to repair the many wounds that have been opened in our midst, help healing and contribute to a new vision for our Church.

Dr Maria Harries AM

CEO's Message



My first year at Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) has certainly been an eventful one; one which sees the organisation and its members working in exceptionally challenging times.

While the drought and bushfire devastation have tested the strength of people, families and their communities, the COVID-19 pandemic is now disrupting lives and livelihoods on a national scale like never before. These are certainly challenging times and I acknowledge all the hard and difficult work that has been done this year by our members to keep up with change and uncertainty. It is testament to the flexibility and nimbleness of our Network that we have been able to pivot and re-direct the way we work on a daily basis to advocate and deliver supports and services to those marginalised and vulnerable amongst us.

I acknowledge the demands upon our member organisations—organisations who are often trying to do more with less. These demands impact staff, business continuity and ultimately the delivery of supports and services to people we seek to serve.

Recognising the CSSA Network as having to keep abreast of change and the need to 'get across' high volumes of information we responded by creating a members' online community platform; Catholic Social Services Online. Using the Mobilize platform, CSS Online is a space to share the latest information, conversations, and to engage with each other on emergency response issues—drought relief, bushfire responses and COVID-19.

While I recognise these are difficult times, I am heartened that opportunities can arise from challenges. As a Catholic Network we have been able to strengthen collaboration across our Church Ministries. This year, in response to the 2019–20 bushfire devastation, CSSA led the way in establishing Catholic Emergency Relief Australia (CERA). CERA has emerged as a Church-wide collaboration of the key Catholic ministries that serve the Australian community. These ministries include parishes, social service agencies, schools and universities, hospitals, aged care providers and religious congregations.

This year we have also worked to deliver unique and extremely valuable data in the Mapping the Potential project. Mapping the Potential research looks at disadvantage and persistent disadvantage and uses a holistic framing of indicators which include economic, education, health and social factors; all of which contribute to a community's experience of disadvantage. Our former Director of Research, Brenton Prosser PhD, developed an excellent foundation for this research and its co-design with members.

The Mapping the Potential project provides us with the capacity to better understand the multi-dimensional nature and location of communities who suffer disadvantage. This gives our Network the capacity to more specifically tailor and direct supports and services to those most in need. As the peak social services body for the Catholic Church, it allows us to drive evidence-based advocacy to leverage for the direction of resources to support people who are vulnerable and in need.

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In these unprecedented times of COVID-19 we have demonstrated the importance of a strong national voice for the Catholic social services ministry which has led to positively impacting the Federal Government's pandemic response policy, particularly that of JobKeeper and emergency relief initiatives. I look forward to continuing to work closely with CSSA's member organisations in the service of those experiencing vulnerability in its many forms. Centred on our common mission to follow Christ in serving those made poor and marginalised, we seek to bring about experiences of hope and dignity in their lives. Invariably the people we serve shape us too, influencing our view, and opening our hearts to new ways of understanding the communities in which we live.

In this same spirit of mutuality, I extend my sincere thanks to the leaders and staff of our member organisations for your support, your resilience, your insights and your generosity of spirit. It is a privilege to serve alongside you, and I look forward to the year ahead as we continue to bring Christ's example of love and compassion to all of those with whom we work.

As we embark on the year ahead we have streamlined our governance through a consolidation process of CSSA and CSSA Ltd. This will allow CSSA to better meet the regulatory requirements of governments, while at the same time remaining fundamentally the prophetic voice of the poor to government, for the Catholic Church in Australia. And as we move to this new governance structure I would like to acknowledge and thank our board members for their wisdom, expertise, assistance and support in navigating that process and to Rev Dr Stephen Hackett MSC, as General Secretary of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) for his assistance and advice.

I pay special tribute to our CSSA staff for their continued innovation, dedication and commitment to our work. And in particular, in closing, I would like to give my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Dr Maria Harries who as board chair, has guided CSSA for the last seven years. To her role as board chair, Maria has brought her deep commitment to ensuring the Catholicity of our work, and in developing sustainable communities that are just, healthy and inclusive, along with unique understandings and insights into children and families, child protection, mental health and the nature of entrenched disadvantage. Maria's term as chair will end in November 2020, and I am delighted that she has accepted the invitation to present the 2020 McCosker Oration. I would also like to thank Maria personally for her leadership and direction as I embarked on my inaugural year as CEO of CSSA.

Thank you Maria, for your guidance and grace.

Dr Ursula Stephens

Our Research—Mapping the Potential

This year we launched our major research project Mapping the Potential. Mapping the Potential has been a collaboration between CSSA, the Australian National University, and our CSSA members. The research has been co-designed and is applied in its approach, making it hugely valuable and a unique piece of work.



Mapping the Potential research enables the richer understanding of the complex and multi-dimensional nature of persistent disadvantage, and builds the capacity of the Network to respond more accurately to the needs of the people and communities we seek to serve. The data provides the hard numbers for our sector to leverage for reform particularly under the new paradigm that has been brought about by the experiences of long term drought, devastating bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mapping the Potential data allows us to identify pre-existing factors of vulnerable families and households by location (e.g. housing stress, rental, low income, un-employment) and gives Catholic social service providers the means to develop highly localised programs to tackle this disadvantage. It also provides strong evidence to leverage for reform to government by providing facts and insights into the multi-dimensional nature of persistent disadvantage and its location.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time, and to respond to the call to reduce public gatherings, we cancelled the launch of the research report at Parliament House in Canberra and released the report online on the 23 March.

The second tranche of data received in June included a range of new variables (at the SA2 level). This data was consolidated with the first report; it was then designed with a highly accessible easy to navigate CSSA interface. The Report was showcased to 25 member participants at a webinar in the first week of July and was very well received. As such future training webinars are being developed.

We have been pleased with the response to the research project and to the Report both by members who have said it will provide them with greater capacity to tailor supports and services and from parliamentarians who are keen to better understand their electorate's profile and need.



Mapping the Potential research gives us the insights and understandings to tailor services to build strong, supported and enabled communities

Our Advocacy— Influencing Policy

As part of our government relations and advocacy work we regularly engage with members of parliament, senators, and staff as well as officials from key government agencies. We also participate in relevant parliamentary inquiries; as well as reviewing legislation to understand the intended and unintended consequences and we make representations as appropriate.

Our Parliamentary submissions during this reporting period include to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs into the adequacy of Newstart and related payments, the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the Senate Select Committee into the 2019–20 Bushfires.

As part of our broader advocacy work in February we organised a CEO parliamentary day with a number of CSSA member CEOs attending meetings with us at Parliament House Australia. We met with members of parliament whose electorates were impacted by the summer bushfire devastation.

These meetings allowed for the sharing of experience of the recent bushfire response and to hear from the parliamentarians how they were dealing with the emergency response within their own electorates. We also engaged with senior officials from the Department of Social Services to discuss a range of issues including emergency relief funding, the future funding of the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO), changes in the social services portfolio programs and the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Capital Funding grant.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

CSSA worked closely with the Department of Social Services in shaping the development of a national NDIS workforce plan. In May our submission to the Joint Standing Committee for the NDIS urged the government to prioritise the development of a national workforce plan that includes an awareness raising campaign to attract and retain workers; we also called for opportunities for enhancing skills development within the workforce; re-examining the NDIS fee structure; and the need for the government to support pathways to meaningful employment for willing NDIS participants.

With the onset of COVID-19 pandemic CSSA undertook strong advocacy to government to ensure services to vulnerable people during the lockdown were maintained and that critical protective equipment and training was available to frontline disability workers. We also had detailed discussions with a number of relevant agencies relating to the impacts of COVID-19 on our member workforce and the consequences that it may have on the wellbeing of NDIS clients as some services were forced to cease because of the pandemic.



CSSA is a member of a coalition of charities that successfully lobbied the government to substantial changes to JobKeeper

Newstart (JobSeeker) and JobKeeper

We have worked with and supported the broader social services sector over the year to campaign for an increase in the Newstart allowance and welcome the government's increase to a new JobSeeker rate in response to COVID-19.

We also advocated to Federal government to change eligibility requirements for charities seeking to access JobKeeper. In April we wrote to the Treasurer, the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, seeking discretion to be applied to the JobKeeper subsidy to recognise unique nature of charity funding which would limit access to this crucial support package. CSSA was member of a coalition of charities that successfully lobbied the government to make substantial changes to JobKeeper including reducing the turnover test from 30% to 15% and changes to the exclusion of certain government funding from the turnover test.

Charities Crisis Cabinet

As a diverse and national network of social services, CSSA was invited to become a member of the Charities Crisis Cabinet formed early in the new calendar year. The Cabinet is jointly chaired by Rev Tim Costello AO and Susan Pascoe AM and met for the first time on 31 March 2020. The Charities Crisis Cabinet draws on the leadership and experience of 21 leaders from across the breadth of the charities sector. CSSA has also been signatory to two open letters to government, on 23 April and 14 June 2020 seeking support for charities to keep supporting their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Charities Roundtable

As a valued member of the emergency relief sector we were invited to participate in a round table meeting organised by Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Minister for Families and Social Services, on 4 February. This meeting was to consider how best to respond to the increasing demand for services in response to the bushfire devastation across Australia.

Emergency Relief National Coordination Group.

CSSA was invited to participate in the Emergency Relief National Coordination Group, which was established to provide advice to Minister Ruston on the distribution of additional Emergency Relief funds in response to the COVID-19 impacts.

Our Members' Work

Our members help people who are marginalised and vulnerable to improve their lives by delivering a vast array of social services and programs consistent with the fundamental mission of the Catholic Church.



The CSSA Network has national reach with 650 sites across Australia



Employs almost 15,000 people



Provides 500 different services



Supported by thousands of Volunteers

Supports and services

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal community services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee and asylum seeker support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged care and community home care support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrant settlement services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage counselling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National policy and research initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence counselling and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of home care, including residential services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug, alcohol and/or other addiction services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster care, adoption services and support services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability support and accommodation services through the NDIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting support programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy counselling and support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency relief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral ministries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palliative care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee assistance programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison ministry and post release support programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and relationship support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School counselling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gambling help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma counselling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth services

Responding during the COVID-19 crisis

Member snapshot



CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay innovating and responding during COVID-19.



MercyCare—continuing to care during challenging times.



CatholicCare Social Services Hunter Manning development and relief agency—community kitchen.



Centacare Brisbane's caring and supporting during COVID-19: Geoff and Tony get out for walks twice a week.



CatholicCare Wollongong adjusted services and programs to keep supporting the community during COVID-19.



Centacare Ballarat's No interest loan supporting people on low incomes.



CatholicCare Tasmania's—Build Up Tassie Crew—the Centacare Evolve Housing project.



Jesuit Social Services' Ignite Foodstore providing affordable groceries to the Mt Druitt community.



CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn's new service MacKillop House supporting women experiencing homelessness.



CatholicCare Greater Melbourne Geelong Gippsland.—online cooking program for Refugees.



CatholicCare Sydney's carline counselling service.



CatholicCare NT's—Communicating COVID-19 through the Car Bonnet Project.



Centacare Catholic Country SA supporting families for Families Week across nearly 1 million square km's.



CatholicCare Sandhurst's ParentsNext Turtle Muster celebrating Yapaneyepuk (coming together) at a time of social isolation.



MacKillop Family Services supporting young people and families during COVID-19.



Sacred Heart Mission providing breakfast and lunch takeaway daily to their community.

Working with our Members and the Catholic Network

National Network Forum

The National Network Member's Forum was held on 31 October at the beautiful Chapel at MacKillop Family Services. The theme for the Forum was Empowering Each Other Through Our National Network.

The Forum was opened by the host and CSSA deputy chair, Dr Robyn Miller, with the keynote address given by NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald. Commissioner Fitzgerald spoke of the extraordinarily complex environment that we, as social service providers are working in, and said, how important it was that we, as a Network, kept as a focus the struggles of people in challenging and troubled times. These pertinent words would help guide us, as we faced some of our nation's greatest health, economic and social challenges with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first forum session was led by Peter Selwood, Executive Director Centacare Brisbane, and Ian Thompson, Principal Nous Group, and focused on how we might build better practice governance and mitigate risk in the newly reformed social marketplace. This session resulted in an agreement with members that we would work toward developing a national framework for practice governance.



Dr Robyn Miller, Deputy Chair CSSA, Robert Fitzgerald, NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner, and Dr Ursula Stephens, CSSA CEO.

The second session, chaired by CSSA's Joe Zabar, became a dynamic panel discussion with Brian Loughnane, past Liberal Party Federal Director and John Della Bosca, Associate Director Policy and Research at the Whitlam Institute. The three panel members shared their views and experiences operating within the Australian political system with a focus on advocacy and campaigning. Dr Brenton Prosser, CSSA's Director of Research, led the final forum session. This session focussed on areas of research of significant interest to the diverse membership. The session conversation was driven by a desire to understand the needs of the communities that members seek to serve and how they might, through their service delivery and the design of programs build opportunity and potential to assist people to reclaim their lives.

Catholic Social Services Australia Data Workshop

In February MacKillop Family Services hosted CSSA members for a data workshop where we came together to consider how we might harness the range of data that is collected across the network to assist with better program development, decision making, and public advocacy.

The workshop facilitated by Professor Jim Barber, identified some of the positive advocacy opportunities for the data, including annual statements on key trends, and emerging issues across the network. There was also early interest in exploring how a national data set might be used to inform better practice. There was an important and robust discussion around the development of a national data warehouse and some of the important precursor work necessary by all agencies to give effect to quality and consistent data.

There was general consensus that more could be done with our data, a point confirmed by Barry Sandison, CEO of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare who outlined the work of his agency and how we might use their data capacity to supplement our own. There was agreement that we should further explore the opportunities of working together in realising the potential of our data but that in the short term our focus would be on the delivery of the Mapping the Potential research and data delivery.

National Catholic Social Services Conference

CSSA partnered with Catholic Social Services Victoria (CSSV) to deliver the National Catholic Social Services conference *Serving Communities with Courage and Compassion*, held 26–28 February at the Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne. The conference provided the opportunity to strengthen and advance our work in Catholic social services through a shared critical, forward looking focus of our collective missions.

CSSA member organisation representatives contributed to the panel discussion across a range of issues including First Australians, housing and homelessness, children and vulnerable people, regional Australians and those impacted by domestic violence, disability and the justice system.

One of the highlights of the conference was the insights provided by the panel of young leaders of Catholic organisations who gave a fresh perspective to the notion of a 'way forward in mission' and their concern that the people they were seeking to serve were not reaching their full potential. The panel agreed that the positive way forward was to prioritise people as both the focus and source of change.

CSSA's CEO, Dr Ursula Stephens, presented the Mary MacKillop Oration at the Conference; titled, *Speaking Truth to Power*, Dr Stephens challenged the audience to consider Mary MacKillop's courage and conviction to speak truth to power and to have the willingness, faith and courage to do so even at times when that truth would have repercussions. Dr Stephens spoke of the need to remain steadfast and not be distracted, but rather to persist and confront those who hold important positions, whether in government, business or religious institutions; to demand a moral response to a problem; to endure criticism of the institutional church and hold on to the truth that is our faith in action.

Spirituality, Leadership and Sustaining a Caring Workforce provides insights into how different agencies undertake to care, support and sustain the spirit of those working on the frontline

Spirituality, Leadership and Sustaining a Caring Workforce

During the year a number of members acknowledged the great expertise amongst the membership on the topic of vicarious trauma, sustaining a high functioning caring workforce and leadership. CSSA recognised that this expertise could be packaged into a resource, and the result has been a collection of essays from across the membership: *Spirituality, Leadership and Sustaining a Caring Workforce*. The book, edited by Brenton Prosser PhD provides insights into how different agencies undertake to care, support and sustain the spirit of those working on the frontline. Primarily, *Spirituality, Leadership and Sustaining a Caring Workforce* is a resource for member organisations and their leaders and staff, and for those in the caring profession and students of the profession. We acknowledge and thank the contributing authors who have together provided rich reflections on how the expressly religious dimension of the mission of the Catholic social services can be a resource for all working in the social service space. We look forward to its release in the coming year.

Ministry Leadership Program

The Ministry Leadership Program is a unique formation program designed for Australian Catholic Health, aged care and social service leaders to ensure the healing ministry of the Church is faithful to the Gospel. CSSA is continuing its involvement in the Program which has been transferred to the Australian Catholic University. The board has awarded a scholarship to CEO Annemarie Binger to participate in this dynamic program in 2021.

Family Relationship Services Australia Conference

The Family Relationship Services Australia conference is one of the largest annual gatherings of practitioners, academics and policy makers working to support children, families and communities. CSSA members had a significant presence across the conference program this year with member representatives speaking on a diverse range of topics including; family dispute resolution, trauma informed approaches to parenting, connecting to culture—healing and hope for First Australians, child safety and protection and adults on the autism spectrum.

On the evening prior to the conference we were delighted to host a networking event for our members, which was a great way to catch up with colleagues from far and wide. We also hosted an exhibition stall for members where they could showcase the diversity of their services. Both activities were very well received by member representatives.

Plenary Council

In preparation for the Plenary Council 2020 (now postponed to 2021), CSSA CEO Dr Ursula Stephens has participated in the selection of the writing and discernment group for the theme 'Joyful, Hope-filled and Servant Community', as well as leading a number of Diocesan and parish discussions on this theme.

CHA Equity Research Symposium

On 20 September we participated in the Catholic Health Australia, Health Equity Research Symposium in Melbourne. Dr Ursula Stephens facilitated the day long forum which drew linkages between health equity principles and the social determinants of health, community services, schools and family life. CSSA's former Director of Research, Dr Brenton Prosser's session provided conceptual insights into our research agenda with other sessions providing opportunities to highlight stronger links across the Catholic health, education and community sectors including topics about social impact initiatives, school-based hubs and the Sydney Homelessness Initiative.

Catholic Emergency Relief Agency (CERA)

The unprecedented bushfires that devastated parts of Australia during the 2019–2020 summer were the catalyst for deeper collaboration between Catholic ministries during the year. After much effort and with CSSA taking the strategic lead on the whole of Church response to natural disasters, the Catholic Emergency Relief Agency (CERA) was launched in February, chaired by Susan Pascoe AM.

CERA brings together key peak national organisations within the Catholic Church: the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia, Catholic Health Australia, Caritas, the National Catholic Education Commission and the St Vincent de Paul Society.



In May of this year grant funding for the on-going recovery of the 2019–2020 bushfires was made available through CERA; with that grant funding made up of 100% donation contributions received from Catholics across Australia, and overseas, in response to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference CERA Appeal. The funds have been distributed to local organisations and services to provide trauma and grief counselling, emotional support and community building initiatives. Following an assessment of the 24 applications received, 15 organisations received a total of \$110,000 to support projects and programs across New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

Catholic Bushfire Communities Recovery Services

Global Giving is the world's largest crowdfunding community. Based in the United States, Global Giving raised more than US\$4m in response to the summer bushfires in Australia. Global Giving and CSSA entered into a preferred partner relationship, and we received US\$100,000 donation to support our bushfire recovery services.

Working with First Australian communities to Close the Gap

As a national network we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop culturally appropriate supports and services for Community and we acknowledge the commitment of the Government and First Australian organisations revised Closing the Gap targets. There are 16 new targets, which incorporate much of the work within our Network including reducing incarceration rates, suicide rates and child removals. The revised goal to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care by 45% is a target that many in the Indigenous Community have been fighting for decades and that our Network firmly supports.

Membership of Committees and Advisory Groups

- Australian Catholic Housing Alliance
- Australian Social Justice Advisory Council
- Australian Council for Social Services
- Australian Catholic Bishops Commission for Social Justice and Service
- Catholic Emergency Relief Australia Taskforce
- Community Council for Australia—Charities Crisis Cabinet
- Family Relationship Services Australia
- Mental Health Australia
- National Emergency Relief Coordination Group
- National Charities Bushfire Recovery Coordination Forum
- Australian Taxation Office—NFP—stewardship group
- National Coalition on Child Safety and Wellbeing.

Governance Review and Consolidation

The environment in which we support Australian Catholic social services has changed significantly since CSSA was established within the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) over sixty years ago. The CSSA Board has been considering the effectiveness and sustainability of the current governance structure that encompasses CSSA and CSSA Ltd.

Following this lengthy period of discernment and discussion, including an extensive consultation process with our members and stakeholders, we are pleased that the new governance structure for CSSA to best suit the delivery of our Mission in the future has been agreed with the ACBC. This includes the Deed of Consolidation which brings together CSSA and CSSA Ltd into a new governance structure and a modern constitution. The new consolidation entity is due to commence trading from 1 October 2020 following the 2020 Annual General Meeting.

Our Board

- Dr Maria Harries AM, Chair
- Mr Michael Austin
- Bishop Paul Bird CSsR
- Ms Anita Veivers
- Ms Clare McNamara
- Dr Robyn Miller, Deputy Chair
- Kathleen Tierney RSM AO

Our Staff

- Ursula Stephens, CEO
- Joe Zabar, Deputy CEO and Director, Advocacy
- Mary Jamieson, Director, Corporate



As a National Network
of Catholic Social Services
our expertise and advice is
highly regarded



Financial Summary

For period ended 30 June 2020

The audited financial statements for CSSA for the year ended 30 June 2020 are available for download at www.cssa.org.au.

The 2019 Annual General Meeting endorsed the appointment of Hardwickes, registered auditors in the Australian Capital Territory, as the Auditors for CSSA for the 2019–2020 Financial Year.

The Auditor's unqualified independent report states the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and complies with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 of the Financial Statements, and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Regulation 2013. Further, the Auditors have stated they are independent of the Association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ACNC Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to the audit of the financial report in Australia.

The balance sheet for CSSA remains solid with equity at 30 June 2020 of \$2,562,658. A sound net asset and cash position has been maintained. The financial year operating outcome is a deficit of \$94,169, with total operating revenue of \$1,262,264 and total expenses of \$1,356,433. Additionally, there was a \$73,762 below the line fair value adjustment for the loss on the value of the investment held with Catholic Church Insurance. This reflects the downturn in the Australian economy arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Two special projects were funded during the financial year including the governance review and a communications project that included enhancements to our website. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference budgetary review impacted income following the formal announcement in December 2019 by Conference to cease

the annual grant to CSSA. Support from the Conference in the future may be possible through project based funding rather than an ongoing grant.

In consultation with Members, during the financial year, the Board Members passed a resolution to consolidate CSSA by transferring its assets and business to CSSA Ltd. In order to facilitate this consolidation, on 18 July 2020 the CSSA Ltd and the Australian Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic Church (on behalf of CSSA) entered into a Deed of Consolidation. Under the Deed of Consolidation, it is proposed that the operations, assets and membership of CSSA be incorporated into the Company and that CSSA subsequently be dissolved. The consolidation process is working to a completion date of 30 September 2020.

We remain deeply grateful for the strong ongoing financial support and solid commitment from our membership base that ensures the national voice for Catholic social services is maintained. This includes the funding of the major research project, Mapping The Potential, with this important research now released to inform member agency service delivery and program response and the public discourse and policy response and development.

We will continue to work prudently and diligently for our members in working for our common mission for a fairer, more inclusive Australia.

I take this opportunity to thank fellow members of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee for their work during the reporting period.

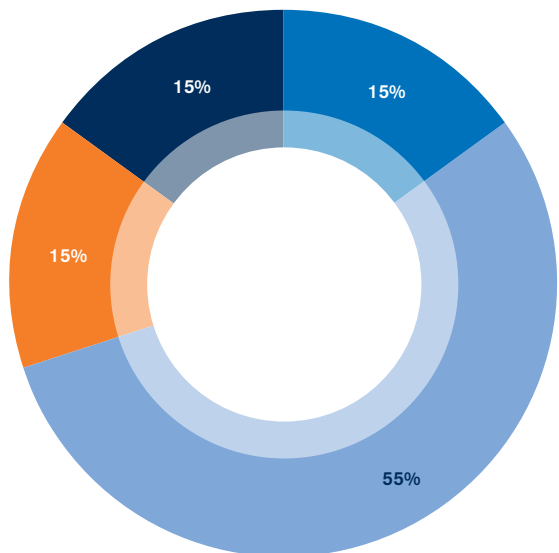
On behalf of the Board of Catholic Social Services Australia, I recommend the financial statements to Catholic Social Services Australia members.

Michael Austin

Chair Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee

Income

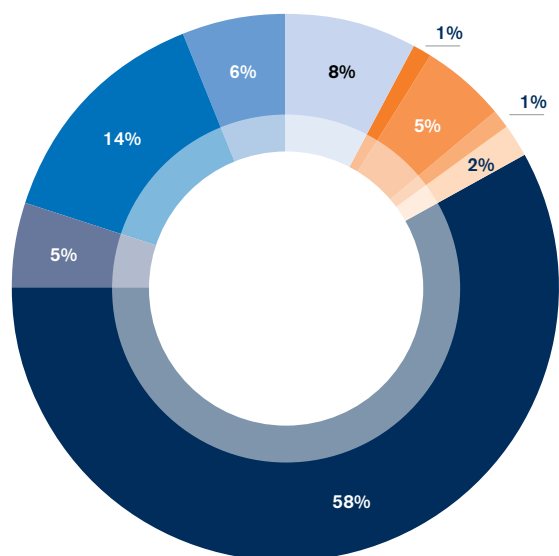
TOTAL REVENUE
\$1,262,264



- ACBC Funding
- Membership Fees
- Research Project
- Other Operating Revenue

Expenditure

TOTAL EXPENDITURE
\$1,356,433



- Administration
- Computer & Equipment Expenses
- Consultancies
- Travel
- Board
- Staff Expenses
- Occupancy
- Research Projects
- Special Projects

Operating deficit \$94,169

Responding during the COVID-19 crisis

Member snapshot



Centacare Catholic Family Services providing trauma-informed care for young people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, across metro and regional SA.



CentacareCQ a guide on coping mechanisms during the COVID-19 Pandemic.



Centacare North Queensland Housing and Accommodation Help Line was established as an immediate response to support Mount Isa community members affected by job losses and/or self-isolation as a direct result of COVID-19.



Centacare South West NSW supporting the community with counselling during COVID-19.



cssa.org.au



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