



Catholic Social
Services **Australia**

Annual Report

2021–22



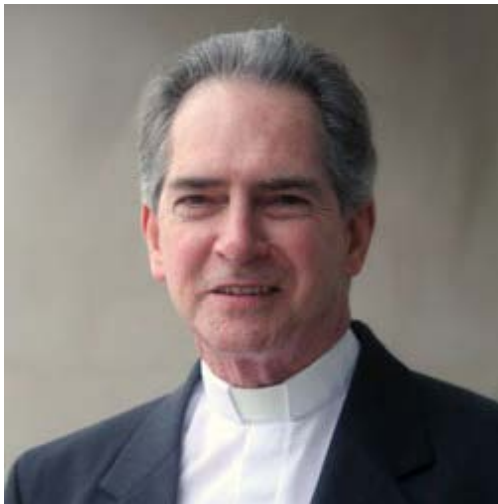
We envisage
a fairer, more
inclusive Australian
society that reflects
and supports the
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and participation
of all people.



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Foreword



I have been invited to write a short overview of my six years on the Board of Catholic Social Services Australia. I would simply like to note one question that has run through all CSSA's activities through those years – the question “How can we help?”

When I joined the CSSA Board in 2016 there was a good deal of discussion about the vision and mission of CSSA. The words we used drew on the long history of CSSA and they are still relevant today. We said that the vision of Catholic Social Services Australia was of “a fairer, more inclusive Australian society that reflects and supports the dignity, equality, and participation of all people” and our mission was “to advance the social service ministry, which is integral to the mission of the Catholic Church in Australia.”

Underlying that sense of vision and mission is a deeply Christian question, “How can we help?” This echoes the question that Christ asked in various ways when he met people in need. For instance, when he was near the city of Jericho, there was a blind man named Bartimaeus, begging by the side of the road. He called out to Jesus and Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?”

In Australia today, our Catholic Social Service agencies continue the mission of Jesus, responding to those in need, whether in the big cities or the small country towns. They ask, “What do you want me to do for you?” or “How can we help?” The answer might be a request for help with housing, or, help finding a job, or help in addressing tensions in a family. In my years on the Board of CSSA, I have come to appreciate the great range of needs that people have and the many ways in which our social service agencies respond to those needs. They are constantly seeking to understand the needs and find ways to help.



Underlying that sense of vision and mission is a deeply Christian question, “How can we help?” This echoes the question that Christ asked in various ways when he met people in need.

This is also true of Catholic Social Services Australia as a national body. In recent years, I have seen the fruits of research that CSSA has done in collaboration with other national bodies, such as Catholic Health Australia and Australian Catholic University. CSSA has sought to understand the changing needs of people throughout Australia and find ways to help at the national level. This might be through raising issues with the federal government or providing the staff of social service agencies with the formation in Catholic Social Teaching. It might be in fostering communication between agencies so that we can learn from one another and draw inspiration from what others are doing. I saw this recently, for example, in the national Conference that CSSA organised in Cairns.

There I was inspired by the initiatives of Catholic Social Service agencies all around the country, from “School Savvy” help with back-to-school needs in Far North Queensland to “Centacare Evolve Housing” in Tasmania.

We are well aware that our resources are limited. Recent years have highlighted the limits on agencies at the local level and on CSSA at the national level. Yet we do have resources and we can provide real help. Jesus saw the value of giving “even a cup of cold water”. May we continue to give cups of water and any other help we can to support our brothers and sisters.

Bishop Paul Bird CSsR



About CSSA

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) is the Catholic Church's national peak body for organisations that deliver its social services ministry. Our membership is drawn from organisations operating under the authority of a diocesan bishop or a religious order and from Catholic lay associations.

Our role is to provide national advocacy on behalf of poor and vulnerable Australians and the Catholic social services organisations that serve them.

CSSA works with our member network, the Bishops of Australia, leaders of Religious Institutes, and the broader Church, partnering with like-minded Catholic agencies including Caritas, Catholic Health Australia, the National Catholic Education Commission, and St Vincent de Paul Society.

Additionally, we collaborate with governments and all people of goodwill, sharing a common goal to develop practical social welfare policies and programs, supporting public policy change that will improve the lives of the poor and vulnerable in Australia.

Our purpose

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) exists to challenge, advocate and campaign for just and compassionate socio-economic policies that uplift the lives of vulnerable people in our communities.

For over 60 years, in partnership with our members, CSSA has been a conduit for social change backed by evidence-based research and aligned to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Our Vision

CSSA envisages a fairer, more inclusive Australian society that reflects and supports all people's dignity, equality, and participation.

Our Mission

CSSA advances the social service ministry, which is integral to the Mission of the Catholic Church in Australia.

Our Values

As an organisation, we work to 5 fundamental values:

- Compassion
- Collaboration
- Excellence
- Accountability
- Innovation



Catholic social teachings



With an ongoing commitment to 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 the 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 the community brings with it both a range of rights and protections and a range of duties and obligations.

Acknowledgement to Country

CSSA acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the custodians of this land. CSSA advocates for a fairer and more inclusive society; recognising and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, children, families, and communities.

Message from the Chair

The world has changed rapidly in response to the pandemic and world events. As the world evolves, so must we. But at the heart of this evolution, what must be constant is the advocacy for those without a voice and those who are marginalised and vulnerable – that remains our mission at CSSA.

Our mission of service is at the heart of CSSA's advocacy.

It has not been an easy journey for the care sector. And it has increasingly been challenging to stand for human dignity in a world that constantly threatens it. So, our work as the voice for vulnerable Australians, and that of members in the network, is increasingly critical to the disadvantaged in our society.

Many Australians have lived with inadequate income support for too long, forcing them into poverty, intractable unemployment, and homelessness. Sadly, some of the basic needs to live with dignity such as food, rent, energy, transport, and health services – have become unaffordable.

In addition to the economic stresses, we also faced climate and ecological emergencies. The 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires burned 24 million hectares of land, where more than 30 people died and thousands were displaced. This major disaster was followed by floods in November 2021. Many Australians are still suffering. There is a shift in our economic priority, and climate change must be part of the mix.



With a newly elected government, now is the time to present a united front. Our partnership with the government must continue and be strengthened to ensure that our mission, as a Catholic social services ministry, stays on course and is amplified.

I am heartened to see, despite the challenges that a restructure brought forward, work continued to stay on mission. This is a testament to the commitment of the Board and staff.

I can't help but reflect on the big footprints that marked our path. CSSA has a distinguished history of advocating, challenging, and lobbying the government on key issues which impact vulnerable Australians.

I look forward to continuing working with the team and our members to ensure we are supporting one another, we collaborate and co-design solutions together, in the true spirit of our continuing mission.

Francis Sullivan AO



CSSA has a distinguished history of advocating, challenging, and lobbying the government on key issues which impact vulnerable Australians.



Message from the Executive Director



The Delta variant of COVID-19 dominated a large part of 2021. During this period, Australians continued to experience illness, loss, unemployment and waves of stressful lockdowns, making our network's response to those in need more important than ever.

As the restrictions eased, we experienced shortages of commodities, including vaccinations and testing kits, a rising cost of living driven by property and rent prices, and further uncertainty created by the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Amidst it all, we continued to act in the service of vulnerable Australians and we continued learning to adapt to working in a changing world.

The CSSA team have also experienced some challenges. We have been an organisation undergoing a transition period with the legal consolidation of our two entities and the subsequent restructure of CSSA. Like many of you, we had to do more with less. But I draw comfort in knowing that in over 65 years of CSSA's history, no matter what the challenges were, we can make a difference in many lives, and we will continue to walk the path.

Maintaining CSSA's momentum became a priority, and so was recruitment. We onboarded a Membership Engagement Officer in September 2021, an Administrative Officer in February 2022, and finally, a Communications Director in April 2022. While the team may be lean, I am pleased to say that we have more than 100 years of combined industry, government, and commercial experience! One could say that we turned a new page, a reset at CSSA.

To ensure we stayed connected with our network, our newly formed team planned and delivered our first National Conference since 2019. The theme was 'Review, Reset and Renew' and aligned with Pope Francis' *Fratelli Tutti*. This encyclical aspires to universal friendship for building a better world. Our Conference echoed that aspiration; to connect with our network and encourage cross-agency links and collaboration.

The Conference was a great success, with every state in the network represented and 94% of respondents to our follow-up survey telling us that they plan to attend the next one. The attendee survey also gave us insight into which aspects of the Conference best met members' needs, and we will be sure to emphasise those elements next time.

The Federal Election on 21 May 2022 gave us a new government and political landscape to navigate. Before the election, we developed a [CSSA Federal Election Statement](#) and ran a 6-week social media campaign on the NDIS, Aged Care, and Family support services. The campaign resulted in 88% reach with our followers and created 2894 impressions.

We continue to engage with Ministers, Members of Parliament, and senior staffers to ensure that our members, and the vulnerable and voiceless are represented, and to put a spotlight on joint sector issues like NDIS, homelessness, and fair wages. I will keep shaping and strengthening our advocacy work to communicate the needs of the sector and the complexities of persistent disadvantage to the elected government.

I want to take the opportunity to thank the CSSA Board members for their support during this transitional period. To Bishop Paul Bird CSsR and Sister Kathleen Tierney RSM AO, thank you for your valuable advice, input, and kindness.

My team and I look forward to working with new board members and network members.

Monique Earsman



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

2.

To develop and strengthen the Catholic social services sector in Australia

3.

Reflecting and celebrating the Catholic Church's mission of charity and social justice

4.

Ensuring the capacity and sustainability of Catholic Social Services Australia to deliver the strategic priorities

Our work for the year

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

Federal Election Statement 2022

In [CSSA's Federal Election Statement](#), we called for a range of measures to arrest and reverse the trend of a widening gap between the wealthy and the poor. Our key asks were:

- A genuine investigation of a minimum basic income for all Australians
- Requiring that all NDIS providers be registered as providers so that participants can have a fair and equitable delivery of services
- Funding for providers to secure care staff to enable greater service outcomes for participants
- Abandoning and reversing the implementation of the changes to aged care funding
- Providing a coordinated nationwide funding package for free tutoring to support vulnerable students across the country who experienced disrupted schooling due to COVID-19
- Providing ongoing support to people with low digital literacy by funding the Digital Access Hubs to empower older Australians, those with disabilities, and those who cannot afford devices and internet services to access their personal administration online.

In support of these asks, we also ran a 6-week social media campaign on the NDIS, Aged Care, and Family support services from mid-April 2021 until the day of the election. The campaign resulted in 88% reach with our followers and created 2894 impressions.



2.

To develop and strengthen the Catholic social services sector in Australia

2022 National Conference – Review, Reset and Renew

After a two-year pause in conferencing, our goal with the 2022 CSSA National Conference was to create the opportunity to reconnect, particularly given the disruption caused by COVID-19 and the significant personnel changes in recent years.

We chose Cairns for several reasons – we wanted to enable attendees to step back from their busy lives and reconnect with nature in a beautiful environment, but we also sought out a location accessible by a major airport.

Ultimately, the Conference fulfilled its purpose of creating a space to share experiences, stories, ideas, and innovative approaches to meeting new challenges in our working and spiritual lives. Cross-Agency connections were re-established and strengthened, and attendees explored common areas of interest and concern with fellow service providers.

The bulk of the planning for the Conference took place in the 2021–22 financial year, with the Conference taking place in August 2022. A Conference Report, which will include learnings and the financial outcome, will be distributed to members at the end of 2022.

87



ATTENDEES

35



AGENCIES IN ATTENDANCE

3.

Reflecting and celebrating the Catholic Church's mission of charity and social justice

Evidence-based research

CSSA, together with Australian Catholic University, Caritas Australia, and Catholic Health Australia, are collaborating on a research project around the work of Catholic agencies in the family and domestic violence space.

The project will map and analyse the work we are all doing to attempt to prevent and respond to family and domestic violence in Australia, and in some of the countries where Caritas operates. Ultimately, the project seeks to understand the unique contribution of Catholic agencies to addressing this devastating issue.

Committed to informing a Catholic response to the issue, the project affirms Pope Francis' declaration that "*Violence against women cannot be treated as 'normal,' maintaining a culture of machismo blind to the leading role that women play in our communities... It is not right for us to look the other way and let the dignity of so many women, especially young women, be trampled upon.*"¹

The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns have exacerbated this issue and highlighted existing and new gaps in support.

The first stage of the project will be completed in early 2023.

Collaboration with major Church providers

In the lead-up to the 2022 Federal Election, the Major Church Providers group (which includes CSSA, Anglicare, the Salvation Army and Uniting Care) wrote an open letter to all candidates calling on them to commit to the following policy proposals:

- Enshrining a Voice for First Nations peoples in the Australian Constitution
- Increasing the rate of JobSeeker payment to at least meet the poverty line
- Building and supporting the development of safe housing and stable accommodation for those experiencing homelessness
- Ensuring that the NDIS delivers on its objectives
- Protecting Australians from domestic and family violence.

¹ Pope Francis, *Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Chile & Peru (15-22 Jan 2018), Meeting with the population*, 19 January 2018, in Cristina Gomez, *A Catholic Response to Domestic Violence*, Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay, 2020, 4.

4.

Ensuring the capacity and sustainability of Catholic Social Services Australia to deliver the strategic priorities



The mural at CSSA is a design by artist Trevor Dickinson, a quirky but endearing image of old concrete bus shelters that are iconic around Canberra.

Member engagement and communication

A key focus of the financial year was rebuilding our capacity and reconnecting with members post-pandemic.

This involved all the operational tasks that come with downsizing and restructuring – such as finding suitable office accommodation and interviewing candidates – but we've also continued to progress our advocacy agenda, build relationships with the new Federal Government and deliver a Conference.

We are delighted to report we have managed to create a cozy hub in O'Connor, ACT. We are close to Canberra City and the Australian Parliament, central to transport, and have access to free parking. Members are warmly invited to visit when in Canberra.

In the spirit of a new start, we refreshed CSSA's Acknowledgement of Country to better reflect our vision.

CSSA acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the custodians of this land. CSSA advocates for a fairer and more inclusive society; recognising and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, children, families, and communities.

To foster and further develop our Catholic identity, we welcomed Father Fred Krammer from the USA in May 2022. During his webinar titled 10 Ways Catholic Charities are Catholic, Fr Krammer reminded us that the charity and advocacy work we are doing has been done by Catholics for over 2000 years.

He spoke about how Catholic agencies not only serve and advocate for those in need, but we also collaborate with people from other faiths and form partnerships with governments to promote the common good and protect the vulnerable.

We are planning a schedule of monthly webinars in 2023 on topics of common interest, from Catholic formation to human resources, and we welcome ideas and input from members.



21

MEETINGS WITH MEMBER AGENCIES



16,306

KILOMETRES TRAVELLED



webinar:

10 Ways Catholic Charities are Catholic



18 attendees



56 YouTube views



42

MEDIA RELEASES



40%

ENGAGED IN A SOCIAL MEDIA PROJECT

1

OPEN LETTER (WTH MAJOR CHURCH PROVIDERS)

9



COMMITTEES, INCLUDING CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT

Financial summary

For period ended 30 June 2022

The 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM) endorsed the appointment of Hardwicks, registered auditors in the Australian Capital Territory, as the Auditors for CSSA Ltd for the 2021–2022 Financial Year.

The Auditor's unqualified independent report states the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 30 June 2022 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 Company 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.

As advised by the former Treasurer in the 2020–21 Annual Report, CSSA intended to align operating expenses with operating income so that the Company would not need to draw on reserves to operate. This objective was achieved. However, due to ongoing pandemic lockdowns in the latter half of 2021, which delayed staff recruitment, expenses for the year were significantly lower than expected. As a result, CSSA achieved a surplus of \$285,089.

Accounting for an unrealised loss on our investments, CSSA had a total comprehensive income of \$184,564. Therefore, our total net assets have risen from \$3,780,416 in 2020–21 to \$3,964,980 in 2021–22.

Two other matters that have impacted the quantum of the profit include:

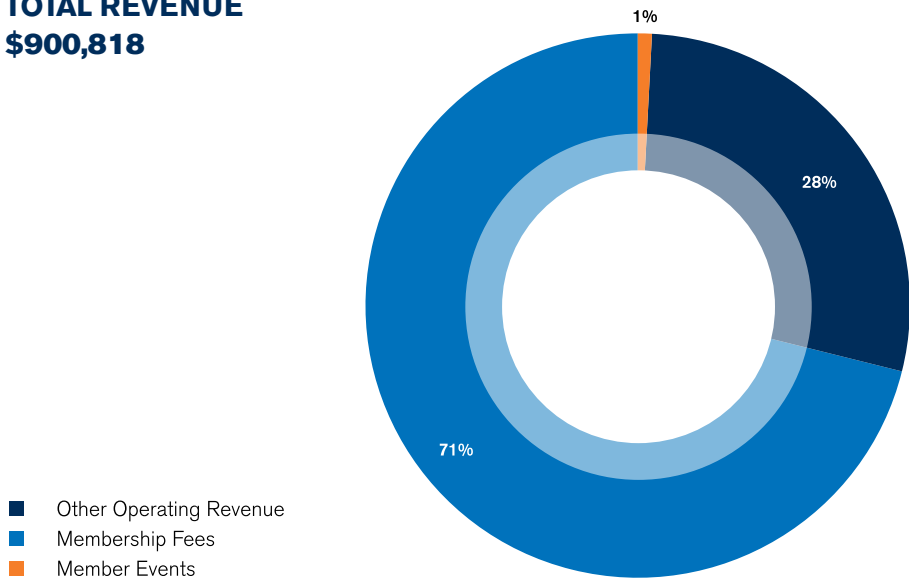
- **Bushfire Recovery Project:** As a result of pandemic restrictions and the resignation of the principal contractor in March 2022, there has been a slower than anticipated roll-out of the Bushfire Recovery Project in south-eastern NSW. Funding of \$99,612 from a Resilience NSW grant was allocated to the financial year; in contrast, just \$75,769 was spent delivering the project. This means that the surplus includes approximately \$24,000 in unspent grant funding.
- **CSSA National Conference:** This year's Conference was held in August 2022. However, planning and an outlay of approximately \$35,000 occurred in the financial year ending 30 June 2022. In the same period, \$18,882 was received from Conference Registrations. The full financial reconciliation and outcome of the Conference will be dealt with in a separate report.

The CSSA Board endorsed a proposed budget for the 2022–23 financial year at the 4 June 2022 Board meeting. If implemented as described, CSSA anticipates a small operating profit of no more than \$10,000 in the 2022–23 financial year.

Catholic Social Services Australia 2021–22

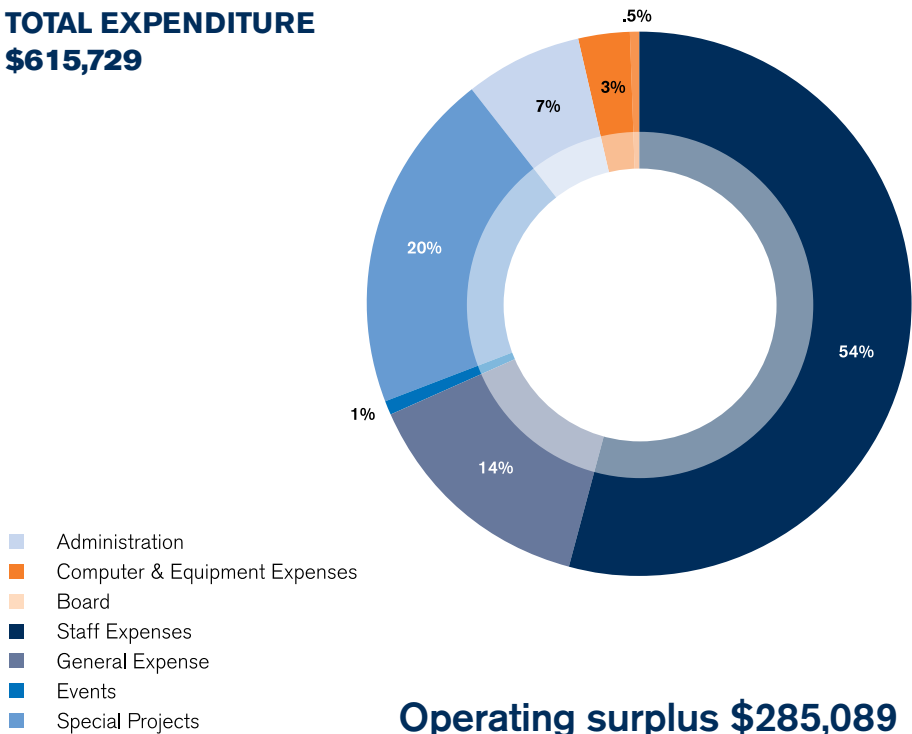
Income

TOTAL REVENUE
\$900,818



Expenditure

TOTAL EXPENDITURE
\$615,729



Operating surplus \$285,089

Board members

Board members list and Board meeting dates and AGM

- Francis Sullivan AO, Chair
- Most Reverend Bishop Paul Bird CSsR
- Michael Austin (until November 2021)
- Clare McNamara (Treasurer)
- Robyn Miller
- Peter Monaghan
- Sister Kathleen Tierney RSM AO
- Anita Veivers
- Monique Earsman (Secretariat)

13 August 2021 (Board meeting)

5 November 2021 (AGM/Board meeting)

11 March 2022 (Board meeting)

3 June 2022 (Board meeting)



Member organisations

By CSSA's by-laws, CSSA members are convened into one of 5 specific branches.

New South Wales/ Australian Capital Territory

- Association of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor
- CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn
- CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay
- CatholicCare Hunter-Manning
- CatholicCare Sydney
- CatholicCare Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains
- CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes
- CatholicCare Wollongong
- Centacare Bathurst
- Centacare New England North West
- Centacare South West NSW
- Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul
- Dunlea Centre, Australia Original Boys Town
- Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea
- Marist180
- MaroniteCare
- Marymead CatholicCare
- Sisters of Charity Community Care

- Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart Congregation Leadership Team
- St Agnes' Care and Lifestyle
- St Francis Social Services
- St Francis Xavier's Parish, Centacare Ballina
- Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries
- Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta

Central

- CatholicCare NT
- Centacare Catholic Family Services
- Centacare Catholic Family Services Country SA
- SA Province of the Sisters of Saint Joseph

Southern

- Cabrini Outreach
- CatholicCare Tasmania
- CatholicCare Victoria
- Centacare Evolve Housing
- Jesuit Social Services
- MacKillop Family Services
- Sacred Heart Mission St Kilda

Western

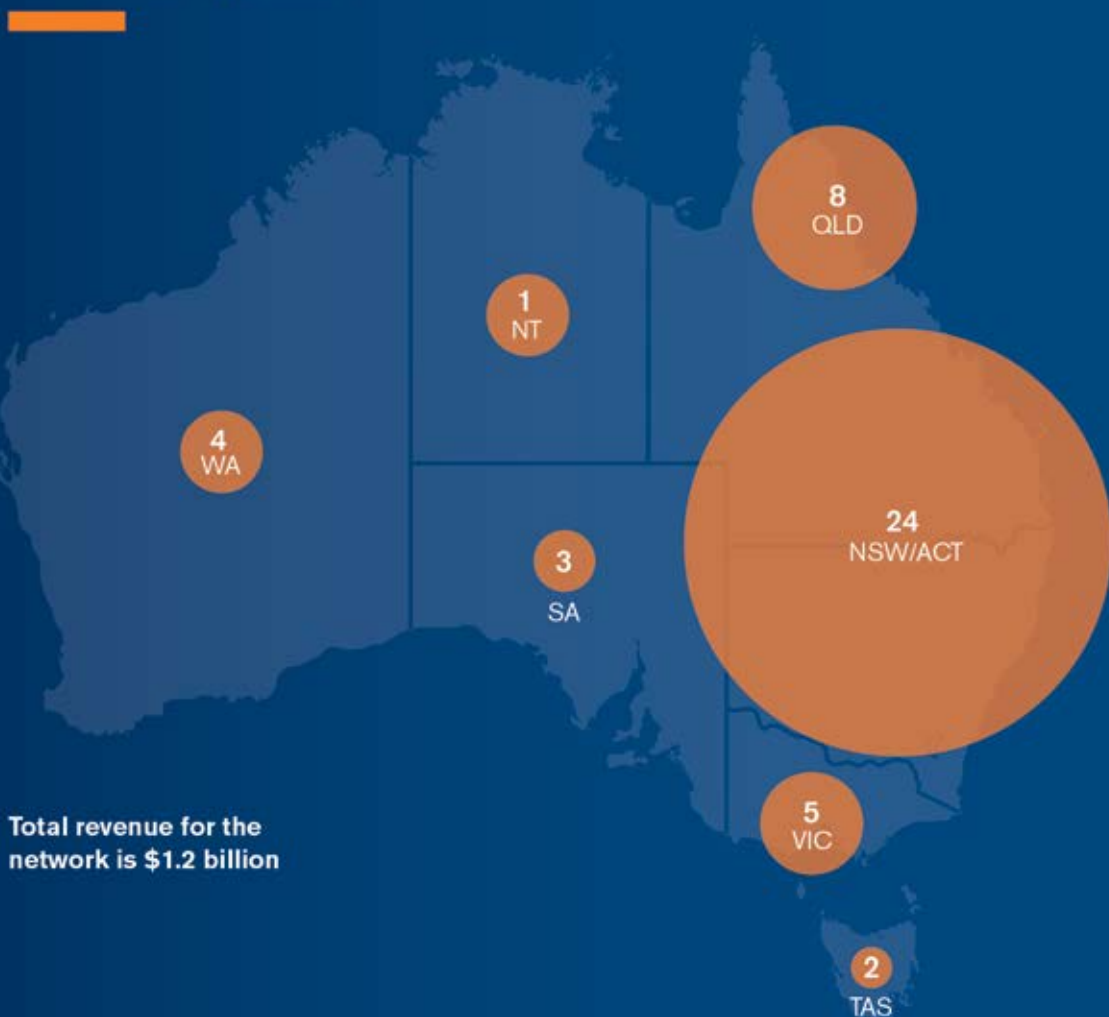
- Catholic Marriage and Fertility Services
- Centacare Geraldton
- Centacare Kimberley
- MercyCare

Queensland

- Aspleycare
- CatholicCare Central Queensland
- CatholicCare Social Services Toowoomba & the South West
- Centacare Brisbane

- Centacare Far North Queensland
- Centacare North Queensland
- North West Queensland Indigenous Catholic Social Services
- Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation

Members by State



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