



Statement of Strategic Intent: 2023 - 2026

Opening statement

Social services are integral to the Mission of the Catholic Church. They are a living expression of the life, teachings and healing ministry of Jesus, as articulated in the Gospels. Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) advocates for the Church's social service ministry and is the peak body for Catholic social service providers. CSSA supports our members in their work, reaching out to those on the margins.

Vision

Catholic Social Services Australia envisages a fairer, more inclusive Australian society that reflects and supports the dignity, equality and participation of all people.

Mission

Catholic Social Services Australia is the peak body for Catholic social service providers.

We support our Member Agencies by

- advocating to the Federal Government on issues affecting the social services sector,
- providing government relations support to member agencies, and
- hosting forums for our network to gather and share information.

We perform these roles in partnership with the broader Australian Catholic Church.

We aim to advocate for an improved legislative and policy environment for our Member Agencies.

Value Proposition

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) draws upon the expertise and lived experience of its network and sector research to advocate for public policy that will facilitate and enhance the delivery of social services to vulnerable Australians.

Additionally, CSSA fosters connectedness between Catholic social service providers and creates forums for them to share their expertise and innovations.

Catholic Social Teaching underpins our work and informs our advocacy and the support we provide to our network.

Operations

Catholic Social Services Australia draws on the experience of decades of Catholic social service and social policy development in Australia. It serves 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.

Catholic Social Services Australia carries out its Mission by interacting with Catholic organisations, governments, other churches, research institutions and all people of goodwill, to advance the development of social services sector policies and other strategic responses that enhance the human dignity of every person and work towards the social, economic, and spiritual well-being of the Australian community.

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

In pursuit of its mission, Catholic Social Services Australia seeks to prioritise the following core principles of Catholic Social Teaching:

- **Dignity of the person**

Our vision for society springs from our 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 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.

Organisational Values

- **Compassion**

Demonstrating a commitment to the concerns of the poor and marginalised.

- **Collaboration**

Building partnerships and alliances on common concerns within the Church and the wider community, locally, nationally and internationally.

- **Excellence**

Pursuing evidence and research-based best practice and continuous improvement in all aspects of our work.

- **Accountability**

Focusing on delivering outcomes and operating in a manner that is both transparent and efficient.

- **Innovation**

Being prepared to take risks in pursuit of our objectives and encouraging passion and integrity.

Strategic Priorities

- 1. To advocate with a distinctive Catholic voice for our Member Agencies that provides services to vulnerable, disadvantaged and impoverished Australians 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 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 Ensuring constructive links with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia and other organisations of the Catholic Church;
- 3.3 Developing alliances and partnerships with other agencies in order to further our social service ministries.

4 Ensuring the capacity and sustainability of 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 administration, and communications strategies and systems.