

Afterword

THE WORK of Jesuit Social Services continues to evolve. In our thirtieth anniversary year we were asked by the Jesuits to take a national leadership role in social justice. And so we have moved into new areas of work and new locations. Our story continues as it began, responding to difficult, entrenched social problems and emerging unmet needs.

The memories and stories told at the four conversations have been part of what has shaped this book. At those conversations there was much joy, laughter and pride. There were also tears and regrets. There was the wish that sometimes more could have been done. But there was also great pride in our faithfulness to the most vulnerable; of being present with people in their bleakest and most joyful moments; of standing with those who have been rejected and dismissed. The purpose of our story can be expressed in the words of historian Greg Denning

I can't give life to the dead, but I can give them voice. I can't give justice to the victims, but I can shake the living from their moral lethargy to change the things in the present that are the consequences of the past.

Reflecting on the past provides signposts for the way forward. David Green spoke of how Jesuit Social Services from its earliest days was not just an observer on the sidelines.

The Jesuits in a sense didn't see themselves as outside this system but right in the middle of it and as a real action part of it. So this wasn't the church or an Order standing outside and knocking to get it. This was an Order that was in there, part of the action as it were.

It is this willingness to be in the action, to be working directly with those in need as well as advocating for change to the structures that keep them at the margins, which will guide our future directions. It resonates with the foundational insight of Ignatius of Loyola who founded the Jesuits – that 'God is in all things'.

Our vision is to 'build a just society'. Our mission, 'standing in solidarity with those in need and expressing a faith that promotes justice', is how we do it. Our values – welcoming, discerning, courageous – have shaped our first thirty years. It is these values that we step off from as we go forward into the future.

Julie Edwards, Chief Executive Officer

JD Doing Justice

REFLECTIONS FROM THIRTY YEARS



JESUIT SOCIAL SERVICES 1977 – 2007



BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY