

Jesuit Social Services

Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that we live and work on Aboriginal lands. We value and respect the knowledge and living culture that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people bring to our communities. We walk alongside them as we strive together for justice.

Our Vision

Building a just society.

Our Mission

Standing in solidarity with those in need, expressing a faith that promotes justice.

Our Values

Welcoming

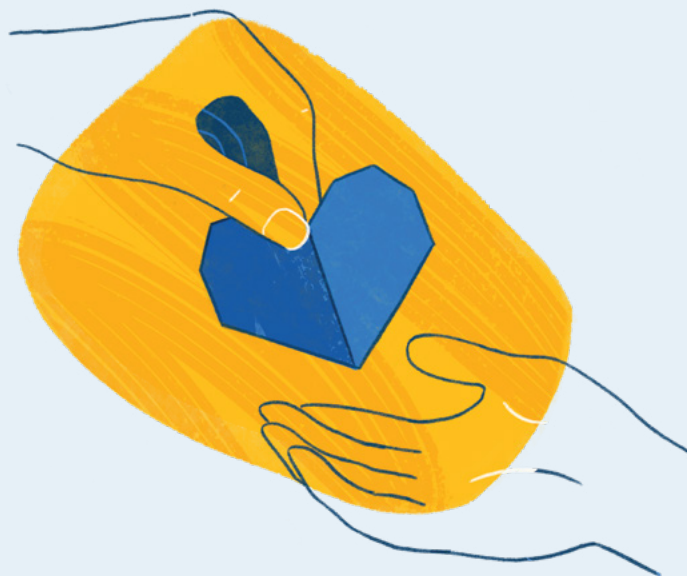
Forming strong, faithful relationships

Discerning

Being reflective and strategic in all we do

Courageous

Standing up boldly to effect change



Our Purpose

Jesuit Social Services is a social change organisation working to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential. We do and we influence. We accompany people and communities to foster and regenerate the web of relationships that sustain us all – across people, place and planet; and we work to change policies, practices, ideas and values that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion. The practice of Jesuit Social Services is informed by Catholic Social Teaching and our Jesuit tradition of respecting the preciousness of each human being, walking with the disregarded, and caring for the earth.



Jesuit
Social Services
Building a Just Society

Context

Jesuit Social Services strives to tackle the stubborn problems that affect human beings through new ways of thinking and operating. Our business is to find solutions. Our efforts extend to working with our colleagues in the Jesuit network within and increasingly beyond Australia who share our mission and commitment to a range of international human rights and social development frameworks.



Over the next five years the world in which we live will still be dealing with the effects of COVID: directly, with its high rate of infections and death of vulnerable people; indirectly, with the massive debt contracted by the nation during the pandemic exacerbating the gross inequality between the very wealthy and the disadvantaged whom we accompany. The positive element in this is the public expectation that Government will take an active part in providing health, educational and other essential services. Accompanied by a widespread desire for more accountable and person-centred governance, this change of attitude may encourage Governments to be responsive to advocacy in relation to policies and programs like ours that embody accompaniment and are strongly based on evidence.

The desire for a stronger government role, however, comes at a time when there is still strong opposition to raising taxes. This mismatch between the demands on government and its revenue will create the risk that people who are disadvantaged and programs that serve them will be neglected, and initiatives to encourage just communities will not be supported.

This could intensify the sense of isolation, anxiety, and mental illness within the community, and encourage political partisanship.

Our five-year Strategic Plan commences on the eve of a referendum about whether to change the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. This is a significant time in our nation's history and its legacy will strengthen, and possibly heighten, the ongoing need for reconciliation.

Almost certainly, extreme weather events like dangerously hot weather, fires and floods will increase public pressure to deal with climate change. But the resistance to paying the costs of doing so will also be strong. The effects of climate change will be experienced most by people who are already disadvantaged in other ways. Chief among them are Indigenous Australians.

More remotely we shall also be affected by international conflict, which will increase the number of displaced people. Ongoing advances in technology such as artificial intelligence bring both risks and opportunities in a world that is becoming increasingly complex.

Our experience

Our experience, particularly over the period of our previous Strategic Plan, informs the priorities we have identified for the next five years, 2023–28. We have identified that there is a need to build understanding about the intersection of social and environmental justice, and how this particularly impacts the most disadvantaged. The community sector, like the broader community, is ill-equipped to address the impact of climate change.

Our commitment to reciprocity of relationship with those we engage with has highlighted the need to ensure that their voice must inform all aspects of our work.

A key insight from our work to promote gender justice and to reduce violence against women, children and the broader community is that there is a dearth of child sexual prevention services focused on perpetrators. Across the country we have seen youth justice systems in chaos with increasing numbers of children on remand. We have witnessed the increasing isolation, loneliness and mental distress of people, particularly young people and those who are already pushed to the margins — a situation that was amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We continue to be dismayed about Australia's response to Indigenous Australians and our ongoing poor treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

The importance of intervening earlier in the cycle of disadvantage has been reinforced by the suffering we observe, and the challenges associated with rectifying situations where poverty and intergenerational poverty are the norm. Our campaigns to build an authorising environment for humane and effective policy and programs propel us to continue to build communities of justice. At the same time, we see the importance of contributing to the building of knowledge about what works.



Who we work with

We work with people with significant barriers to participation and social and economic inclusion.

We accompany them, address their needs and partner with community, business and government to support them onto a pathway to education, training and employment.

We go where the need is greatest and where others won't or can't go. Our doing and influencing span the following people and communities:

- Disadvantaged and marginalised communities
- People with multiple and complex needs
- People involved or at-risk of entering the youth and adult justice systems
- Boys and men whose behaviour is hurting themselves and others
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- People and families seeking asylum.

Organisational priorities

To fulfil our **Purpose** and achieve our **Social Impact** we will invest in our people and practices to focus on the following five **Priorities over 2023-28**:

1. Disrupt the cycle of disadvantage by intervening earlier with the people and communities we engage with.
2. Enhance our programs and advocacy by synthesising lived experience, practice wisdom and evidence.
3. Grow our social impact by closer integration across practice, research, policy, and advocacy.
4. Strengthen our Jesuit organisational identity, nurture the vocational hearts of staff and further embed ecological and gender justice across all activities.
5. Build the organisation's capacity to achieve its mission by being responsive to the times and financially sustainable.



Our social impact

Individuals flourishing in a web of healthy relationships.

Communities empowered to participate and create positive change.

Hearts, minds, and systems changed towards greater love and justice.



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