



**Jesuit
Social Services**
Building a Just Society

Jesuit Social Services

Annual Report
2023–2024



Acknowledgement of Country

Jesuit Social Services acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work, and pays our respects to their Elders, past and present.

We express our gratitude for their love and care for the land and all life, and value and celebrate their cultures that derive spiritual strength from relationships with land, family and community connections, and the storylines of proud and resilient peoples.

Our vision for reconciliation is for an Australia of equality where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians can walk side by side, acknowledging the past, but looking to the future.



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About Jesuit Social Services



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 work 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.

Our vision:

Building a just society.

Our mission:

Standing in solidarity with those in need while 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.

Practice approach and principles

Underpinning principle

Build and promote healthy relationships between the interconnected ecosystem of people, place and planet which, when damaged, lead to disadvantage, poverty, inequality, prejudice and exclusion.

Our five priorities

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.



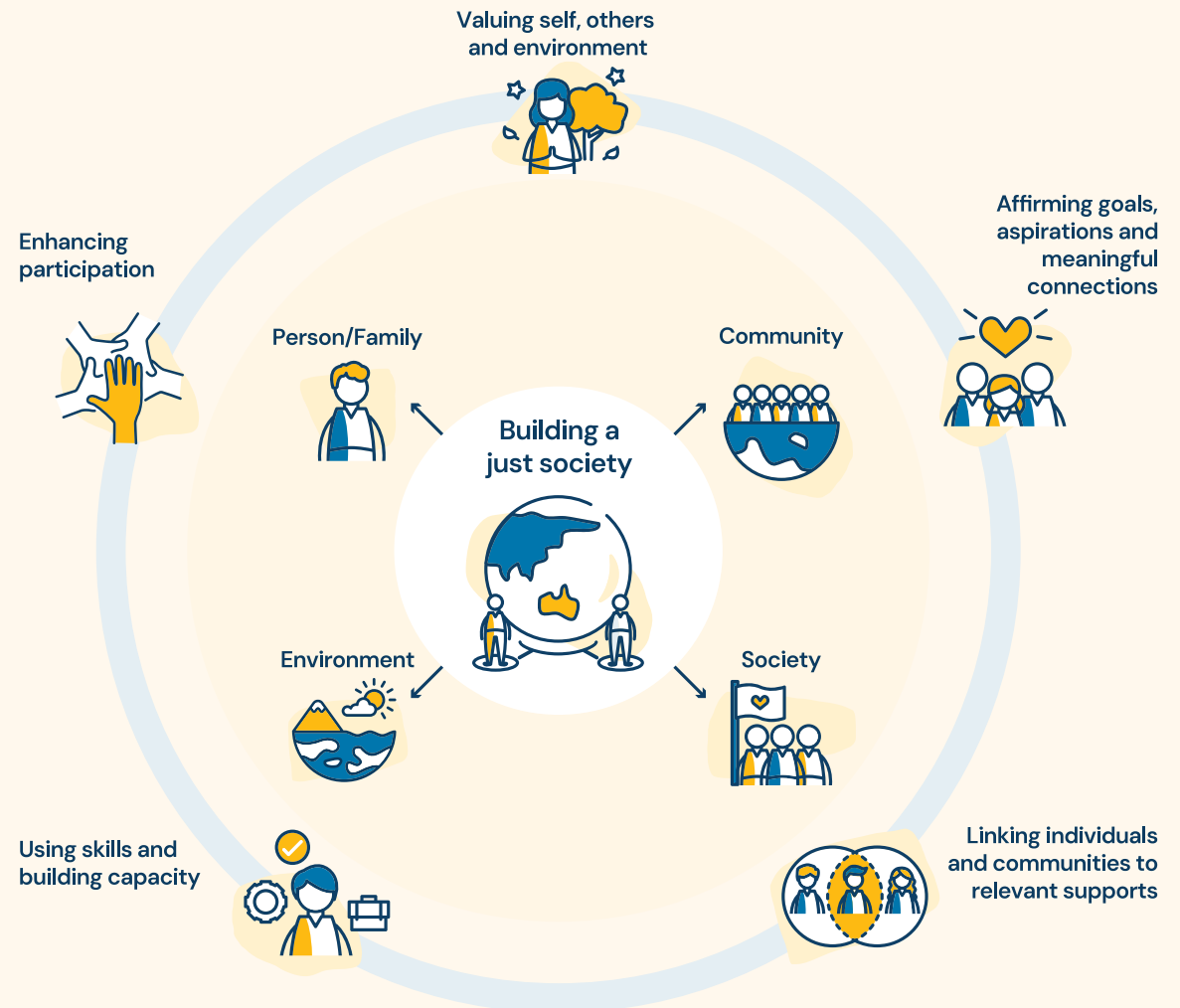
Our way of proceeding

The day-to-day life of Jesuit Social Services brings together three sets of energies and systems: the human spirit of the people who make up the Jesuit Social Services community; the practice framework that ensures services and advocacy are informed by our values and align with our purpose, are evidence-based and effective; and the business processes that ensure people and services are resourced, developed and accountable. We strive for integrity across all the domains of our activity and draw from our heritage to inform and nurture who we are (human spirit), how we 'do' and 'influence' (practice framework), and how we organise ourselves (business processes).

Our way of working:

The practice approach at Jesuit Social Services has five key domains:

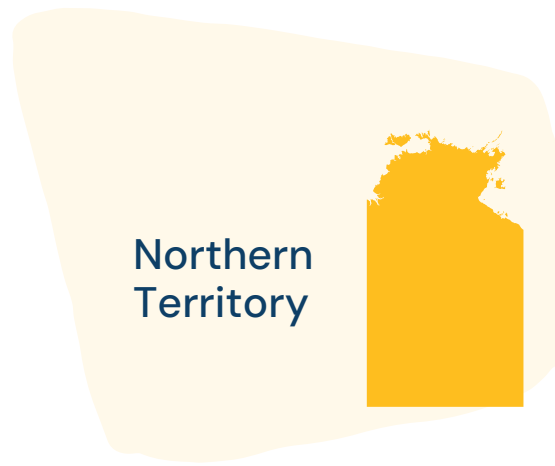
- Value self, others and the environment
- Affirm goals and aspirations
- Link to supports
- Use skills and build capacity
- Enhance civic participation



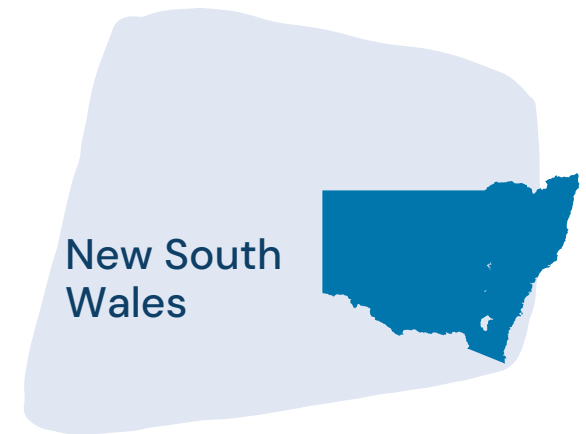
Where we work



- Brunswick
 - Camberwell
 - Carlton
 - Collingwood
- Wurundjeri country
- Dandenong
- Bunurong country
- Flemington
 - Kew
 - Preston
 - Reservoir
 - Richmond
 - St Albans
 - Sunshine
- Wurundjeri country



- Alice Springs
- Arrernte country
- Darwin
- Larrakia country
- Katherine
- Jawoyn, Dagoman and Wardaman country
- Palmerston
- Larrakia country
- Santa Teresa (Ltyentye Apurte)
- Eastern Arrernte country
- Tennant Creek
- Waramungu country
- Wadeye
- Kardu Diminin country



- Willmot
 - Emerton
- Dharug country

Reflections

CEO's message

I am pleased to be reporting to you after another busy year of program delivery and advocacy at Jesuit Social Services – with all of our efforts in support of our vision to build a just society where everybody can flourish.

The landscape in which we currently operate can be challenging. State and Federal Governments are experiencing tight fiscal environments and having to make hard decisions about where to prioritise funding. Cost-of-living pressures impact us all, but particularly hurt the people we support through our programs who are pushed to society's margins.

This means that exploring philanthropic funding opportunities and new and innovative ways of fundraising is becoming more important than ever. One of the five priorities of our new *Strategic Plan 2023–2028* is to build the organisation's capacity to achieve its mission by being responsive to the times and financially sustainable.

Despite the current climate, we are proud to have achieved and celebrated significant milestones over the past year.

The 2023/24 Victorian State Budget provided funding to expand The Men's Project's work supporting teachers to implement the Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships curriculum. The funding will allow us to work with an additional 240 schools over the next four years.

Additionally, the Maribyrnong Community Residential Facility, which provides supported accommodation for men exiting prison, was funded for a further two years. More than 250 people have been supported by the program since it was established in 2020, and an evaluation found that participants are 30 per cent less likely to re-offend compared with those exiting prison without similar housing support.

Our supported accommodation program for young people with cognitive impairments who have contact with the justice system, Perry House, has been expanded and re-developed after we received a Youth Capital Housing Grant from Homes Victoria.

Another major milestone was the opening of the Western Metro Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect Centre, which we operate in Melbourne's western suburbs. This free service, one of eight established by the Victorian Government following the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, supports carers of people living with mental health and/or substance abuse problems. We are proud to be the only community service organisation to deliver a Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect Centre in Victoria.

Jesuit Social Services also received Federal funding to support justice reinvestment work in Katherine, working with and in community to break down barriers to education and employment pathways for young people. In Western Sydney, we continue to support the local community through our Ignite Store and the Willmot Community Hub. This includes facilitating access to provide low-cost and nutritious meals and groceries for the local community, addressing food insecurity and promoting health and wellbeing.

Some of our longest-running programs are also marking major milestones this year, including Support After Suicide, which celebrates its 20th anniversary. For two decades, this program has helped people to navigate the trauma and grief associated with the suicide of a loved one, and we continue to advocate for sustainable funding for this work as demand continues to increase.

This year, Jesuit Social Services is proud to be recognised as an inclusive employer by the 2023–24 Inclusive Employers Index.

The index highlights organisations with a stronger commitment to diversity and inclusion compared to the broader Australian workforce. We also achieved official Rainbow Tick accreditation, a quality framework that affirms our organisation as a safe, inclusive, and supportive space for all staff, volunteers, and participants, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Whilst we are proud to celebrate our many recent organisational milestones, we cannot ignore

our sadness over the 'No' result in the 2023 Voice to Parliament referendum. This result reminds us of the ongoing need for a more welcoming and connected world in which First Nations people and communities can determine their own lives and flourish. As an organisation, we will continue to stand in solidarity with First Nations communities and to work to close health and equality gaps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I also acknowledge that some of our programs have sadly ended over the past year. Ignite Cafe, a social enterprise cafe, supported around 50 participants each year to gain valuable work experience and find pathways to employment. The Victoria Police Diversity Recruitment Program has also come to an end following the cessation of funding by the Victorian Government. This program aimed to enhance the representation of individuals from culturally underrepresented communities in the Victoria Police recruitment process, ensuring that the organisation more accurately reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous contribution made to Jesuit Social Services by our former Chair Patricia Faulkner AO, who left the organisation in March 2024 after 17 years of service. Patricia remains a friend of the organisation, and continues to be a fierce advocate for people and communities on the margins, as she has been throughout her distinguished career. I also welcome Francis Sullivan as our new Chair, and look forward to working with him.

Finally, I would like to thank our staff, volunteers, supporters and donors for their ongoing support.

A photograph of Julie Edwards, CEO of Jesuit Social Services, speaking at a podium. She is wearing a black top and glasses. The background is dark with some stage lighting.

Julie Edwards
CEO, Jesuit Social Services

Chair's message



Francis Sullivan AO
Chair, Jesuit Social Services

It has been a delight to join Jesuit Social Services as Chair of the Board in early 2024. In so doing I want to acknowledge and honour the outstanding service given to our organisation by my predecessor, Patricia Faulkner AO. Her resolute leadership and wise counsel were essential ingredients in building an organisation of social services with a reputation for best practice, reach into the community and social impact. And it is that very reach and impact as a social change organisation that attracted me to Jesuit Social Services. Our mission would be incomplete if it didn't

aim to promote justice, respect the dignity of individuals and prize community development above rugged individualism.

To that end, Jesuit Social Services has embarked on a deliberative five-year *Strategic Plan 2023–2028*. At its heart, through the programs we run, it aims to enable every person to flourish within healthy relationships and communities. This is not a romantic ideal but rather it is a concerted plan to create positive change, both in the hearts and minds of people and also in the systems that would otherwise alienate and marginalise vulnerable individuals.

In short, Jesuit Social Services lives and breathes to make justice real.

In practical ways, Jesuit Social Services enhances our programs and advocacy by integrating evidence-based information, including everyday lived experience and practice wisdom. This down to earth approach delivers results. We are proud that, as a result of more than a decade of advocacy, campaigns and communications, the Victorian

Government has committed to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12 years.

It is also pleasing to report that Jesuit Social Services has solidified its position as a leading expert in the gender justice field. The publication of *The Man Box 2024* report highlighted that Australian men between 18 to 45 years of age, who most strongly endorse rigid attitudes to masculinity are more likely to have used violence, sexually abused their partner, sexually harassed women, experienced poor mental health and displayed problematic gambling behaviours. Our report deepens our understanding of the drivers of gender-based violence and sets out a series of evidence-based recommendations.

Once again, we have embarked on this research because everyone matters, healthy communities matter and change comes about when the causes of violence and injustice are addressed head on.

In early 2024 we were thrilled to be visited by the Father General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Arturo Sosa SJ and Fr Dani Villanueva SJ, a leader in our sector. They were able to meet with senior staff and see some of our programs, such as the Ignatius Learning Centre, in action. It was a valuable opportunity to explore possibilities for further collaboration especially within the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific.

In conclusion I thank our Board and executive, more than ably led by Julie Edwards. I look forward to working alongside them and all our staff, volunteers and supporters.

Provincial's message



Fr Quyen Vu SJ
Jesuit Provincial

I would like to congratulate you again this year for your generous and creative service to people who experience disadvantage. Together with Jesuit Mission and Jesuit Refugee Service you are the institutional face of our Jesuit commitment to walk with the excluded. On behalf of the Society of Jesus I would like to thank you for the way in which you touch so many lives, press for a more just society, and contribute to our international mission.

I would like to express special thanks to Julie Edwards for her contributions to JCAP Secretariats

for Social Ministries. During his visit to Australia, Fr. Arturo Sosa, our Jesuit Superior General, emphasised the significance of your work, and demonstrated his keen interest in it during your conversation with him.

I know that an image of St Ignatius with which you are most familiar is that of Ignatius walking with one foot raised off the ground. It goes back to a companion of St Ignatius who used it to describe St Ignatius' approach to ministry.

It suggests that at Jesuit Social Services your raised foot is always discerning, always looking for new needs and better ways of meeting existing ones, always ready to go where needed.

Your other foot is grounded in deep commitment to your mission to walk with people who are disadvantaged and in friendship with them and with one another.

At Jesuit Social Services this vision of your mission leads you to pay attention to changing needs before they are publicly recognised and to shape new programs that model ways of addressing them.

I was delighted to hear that the Maribyrnong Community Residential Facility that offers housing and coordinated support to prisoners has been re-funded. It recognised the need and effectiveness of the program.

Similarly, your early recognition of the extent of domestic violence and its causes led you to explore the rigid stereotypes of what it means to be a man. These are often associated with unhappiness, and emphasise the need to help boys free themselves from these stereotypes. Your research into these attitudes and the programs you have developed for schools and adults through The Men's Project have been exemplary.

Initiatives like this show that in your work you have one foot raised.

To have one foot grounded in respect and friendship with one another and with the people with whom you work, however, is also important.

This is not easy at a time when the news is full of conflict between people of diverse backgrounds. You too, come from different religions, ethnic and social backgrounds. Your evident respect and trust for each other is a great gift to society as well as to one another.

Our impact



Impact focus areas

As a social change organisation working to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential, we demonstrate our impact across three spheres.

Flourishing individuals



Individuals flourishing in a web of healthy relationships

Empowered communities



Communities empowered to participate and create positive change

Changed hearts, minds and systems



Hearts, minds and systems changed towards love and justice

Statistics

FLOURISHING INDIVIDUALS

14,461

participants supported in direct program delivery



We provide direct service delivery across a range of interconnected social justice areas in Victoria, the Northern Territory and Western Sydney.

Justice and Reconciliation

2,575

people supported

Community and Connections

261

people supported

Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing

2,975

people supported

Gender Justice

358

people supported

Just Places

301

people supported

Education, Training and Employment

7,991

people supported

EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES

94,628

people participated in community engagements



Through recreational, cultural, educational and entrepreneurial community development activities, we support local community members to thrive.

Justice and Reconciliation

1,331

people participated

Community and Connections

7,859

people participated

Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing

3,390

people participated

Gender Justice

23,478

people participated

Just Places

58,570

people participated

CHANGED HEARTS, MINDS AND SYSTEMS

419,704

generated opportunities to drive social change



By engaging with our advocacy, policy, communications and fundraising work, members of the community can contribute towards building a just society.

Justice and Reconciliation

26,191

people reached

Community and Connections

143,322

people reached

Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing

15,528

people reached

Gender Justice

22,131

people reached

Just Places

61,115

people reached

Education, Training and Employment

151,417

people reached

Individuals
flourishing
in a web
of healthy
relationships



Jason was a program participant who assisted with the renovation of our Brosnan Centre in Brunswick over 20 years ago. That experience kickstarted his career; now Jason is a proud owner of his own cabinetry business and remains as in love with woodworking as he was when he was a young man.

Overview

We engage respectfully with individuals experiencing disadvantage and hardship in a way that gives them opportunity to harness their full potential – providing people with hands-on support to connect with community services, build skills and capacity to live independently, establish and affirm their goals and aspirations, participate in their community, and strengthen their view of themselves and others.

14,461

people received direct support from us across Victoria, New South Wales, and the Northern Territory in 2023–24.

2,135 more than 2022–23, or a 17 per cent increase

2,575

People were supported across our Justice and Reconciliation programs including youth and adult justice, and children and young people leaving care or supported to re-engage with education.

1,057 more than 2022–23, or a 69 per cent increase

2,975

People supported across our Disability, Mental Health & Wellbeing programs including support after suicide bereavement, person-centred support packages or NDIS plans, outdoor therapy, and carer support.

Statistics are indicative and not totals

7,991

People supported through Education, Training & Employment programs, including Ignatius Learning Centre and Jesuit Community College.

751 more than 2022–23

1,050

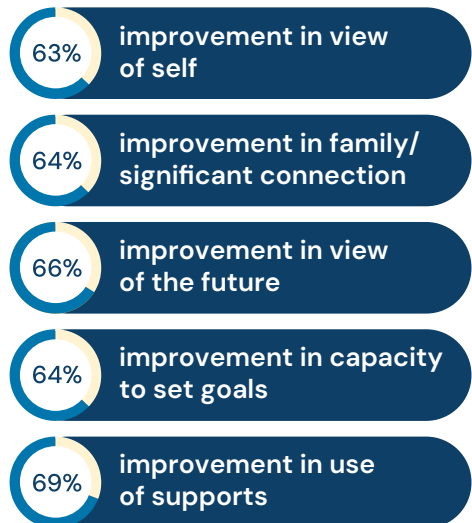
People attended 240 group conferences in Victoria or the Northern Territory.

2,243

Students supported through Jesuit Community College.



Positive change for participants who received individual support during their time with Jesuit Social Services was reported against the Our Way of Working practice framework, with the following outcomes reported for participants:



Highlights

YOUTH JUSTICE GROUP CONFERENCING

Healing through dialogue: Callum's path to making amends

Callum* spent his 16th birthday in custody. He hated what he had done to end up there, and never wanted to go back. Participating in a Youth Justice Group Conference allowed Callum to apologise and take responsibility for his offending, and find support to move forward.

Youth Justice Group Conferencing enables a conversation between young people, victims and the police, aimed at diverting the young person from further or more serious offending. Jesuit Social Services has run group conferencing programs since 2008.

School hadn't been easy for Callum; he left before the end of Year 9 and fell in with a friend who introduced him to crime. Within a year of his first offending, Callum found himself in a bedroom facing a terrified woman he had woken up while looking for her car keys. Looking back on that night, Callum said he felt, "ruined and horrified".

"I think about it daily, I wish it never happened, it's the worst thing I have ever done," he said.

Callum was referred for Youth Justice Group Conferencing, which involved a group of 10 people including victims, his mother, the police, legal representatives and support workers. It gave Callum the chance to apologise in person to the people he harmed, talk about things from his perspective, and then listen to the impact of his offending.

"I do want to start a new life and move on, there's no way I can explain how sorry I am ... I hope you believe me."

Callum

Youth Justice Group Conferencing participant

Callum's remorse was clear to the people who were harmed by his offending.

"To know that you are now determined to turn your life around is a great comfort to me – it turns something bad into something good. I do forgive you, I really do... I wish you well and pray everyday that you

will go forward, stick to your resolve and become an asset instead of a liability to our community," one person said to him.

Callum came out of the group conference with an agreed outcome plan, making commitments to enrol at a TAFE, avoid anti-social peers, re-engage with sport, and find mental health support. Three months down the track, Callum had not reoffended, and had multiple job offers.

"Callum's story shows the value that restorative practices like the Youth Justice Group Conferencing program can have, not just for the young person but for the whole community," said Community Justice Programs Manager Genevieve Higgins.

"He had reflected deeply on his offending while in custody and showed considerable remorse, but it was only through group conferencing that he was able to speak directly to the people harmed and apologise."

**This participant's name has been changed for privacy reasons.*

All participants who have generously shared their stories in this Annual Report have done so with informed consent. Where noted, names have been changed to protect the privacy of participants.



Jobs Victoria program makes a “dream come true” for Biruk

After over 30 unsuccessful job applications and no luck with a Job Active service, Biruk* was losing hope and thought of giving up on his dream of working as an electrician.

He had arrived in Australia from Ethiopia at the age of 17 with limited English, no income, and ineligible for Centrelink payments. When living with family didn't work out, Biruk became homeless.

Fortunately, he managed to link in with a youth refuge, was approved to move into temporary affordable housing, and started work in a warehouse. Biruk had a roof over his head and food to eat, and he was grateful but he wasn't sure what he wanted to do for work.

After a short stint in an accounting course, Biruk realised he is the kind

of person who likes to work with his hands. With encouragement from an African community mentor, he completed training to work as an electrician, but a long job search eroded his self-esteem.

Eventually, friends recommended that he connect with Jesuit Social Services' Jobs Victoria Employment Service program, which assisted him with his resume, job search training, and supported him to find work at an electrical company in 2022 – his “dream come true”.

Biruk said he is receiving great support from his employer and coworkers.

“Getting this job in the career I want has given me purpose, pride in myself and the opportunity to be a good role model for my little brothers. One day I may be able to have my own business, so that I can help others like me.”

**This participant's name has been changed for privacy reasons.*



Highlights

RECONNECT PROGRAM

Wrap-around support enables ReConnect participants to flourish

There are many barriers people can experience reintegrating into the community after exiting prison – including challenges finding and maintaining employment, accessing housing and managing physical and mental health. These barriers impact an individual's ability to create a new identity outside of a custodial environment and the circumstances that led to their offending.

Jesuit Social Services' ReConnect program provides up to nine months of assistance to men and gender diverse people exiting prison in Victoria who are released to the North and West Metro regions of Melbourne, helping them to address some of these barriers, and equipping them with the support and resources they need to lead positive lives.

Program Coordinator Sam Noonan said that helping participants to establish a positive routine and connections in the community is critical to their successful

reintegration, as demonstrated in the story of former participant Chris*. In Chris' case, gaining employment and safe and secure independent accommodation were crucial to his reintegration and led to successes in other areas of his life.

As Father Brosnan once said, "three things I have noted are needed by someone leaving prison: a place to live that is decent, a job they can handle, and lastly, and most important of all, friendship". The ReConnect program echoes this wisdom by providing the wrap-around support that enables participants like Chris to flourish.

"Chris was supported to step into employment shortly after release, which he felt great pride in, and said that going to work every day was able to help him establish a new identity outside of prison," said Sam.

"His employer has been impressed by his work effort and drive, and Chris has told us that he has found his passion and developed a newfound confidence since starting work."

During his time with ReConnect, Chris developed a strong relationship with his Outreach Case Manager, who

helped him achieve a healthy work-life balance and connected him with supports to address his substance use and mental health challenges. ReConnect secured independent accommodation for Chris.

"Chris was supported to move into stable housing, which has had a huge impact on his wellbeing and enabled him to really flourish at work. The program also helped him to set up his utilities and secure furnishings to make his home environment a positive one," Sam said.

Chris has been in employment for more than a year now and continues to thrive.

**This participant's name has been changed for privacy reasons.*



791

people supported in prison or in the community through our adult justice programs

"Having people who believed in him and could help him onto positive pathways was the turning point for Chris. He has stepped into a role helping others released from custody. This opportunity to 'give back' has increased his self-worth and acceptance, which was crucial in making positive changes."

Sam

ReConnect Program Coordinator

SUPPORT AFTER SUICIDE

Expert support after suicide provides hope for the future

When her partner passed away from suicide, Maree* felt her grief was not understood by the mental health services she was engaged with.

Maree has a complex life history that included abuse by her parents and mental health challenges. Due to the coercive control present in her relationship with her partner, Maree had little support from her family and friends. She was feeling very isolated in her grief when she first connected with our Support After Suicide program.

In her early sessions with her Support After Suicide counsellor, Maree talked about her very low sense of self-worth and that she was experiencing suicidal thoughts. Together, they focused on giving space for Maree's grief, helping her to understand her trauma responses, as well as helping her to understand her relationship with her partner. Maree's counsellor also supported her to provide a statement to the Coroner about her partner's death. Maree said she felt so much relief afterwards.

A critical part of the support provided by Support After Suicide was her counsellor connecting with Maree's other mental health support services so they could create a shared approach to her care. This meant that Maree became open to considering further support from the mental health services that she had previously disengaged from.

Almost two years since her partner passed away, Maree is now leading a more stable life and is feeling positive about the future. She meets with her counsellor monthly as she continues to process her grief.

Now in its' 20th year, our Support After Suicide program provides people like Maree with specialised, long-term support in the areas of bereavement, trauma and suicide that other mental health services are unable to provide.

**This participant's name has been changed for privacy reasons.*

1,146

participants received bereavement support after suicide

SUPPORT AFTER SUICIDE

Some serious fun helping kids feel connected after loss

It's a Wednesday morning in the school holidays. A group of primary school aged children plays together in a school hall. It could be any regular school holiday program, yet these children share something in common: they have all had a parent die by suicide. This is Support After Suicide's program tailored to children: Serious Fun.

"It's an opportunity for children who have experienced loss by suicide to come together with other children who have had a similar experience," explains Colin Charles, a counsellor with Support After Suicide and facilitator of Serious Fun. "It is all about giving the kids the sense that they're not alone."

Started by the Support After Suicide program in 2011, Serious Fun is unique: it's the only regular in-person program for kids who have had a parent die by suicide in Australia.



"My child can often feel left out at school and feels a real sense of loneliness after the loss of his dad. But when he walks out of Serious Fun, he's always happy and says, 'there's people just like me'."

Parent of a Support After Suicide participant

Communities
empowered
to participate
and create
positive
change



Overview

We encourage and support local community members to participate, problem-solve, and have agency over their lives, through recreational, cultural, educational and entrepreneurial community development activities that provide new opportunities for community participation, strengthen people's skills, and facilitate community leadership and connection.



94,628

people engaged in activities to empower communities to create change across Victoria, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, and online in 2023–24.

17,011 more than 2022–23, or a 21.92 per cent increase

45,346

patrons benefited from our social purpose enterprises through Little Woods Gallery in Victoria and The Ignite Food Store, Opportunity Shop, and catering businesses in Western Sydney.

12,576 more than 2022–23, or a 38 per cent increase

4,664

people further engaged with our programs through groupwork support, community events, suicide prevention activities, or participation in restorative justice conferences.

Statistics are indicative and not totals

17,390

people accessed online support or resources through the Support After Suicide moderated community, the new Support After Suicide Hub (SASH) for LGBTQIA+ people, the Stop It Now! website, or made enquiries to the Western Metro Mental Health & Wellbeing Connect.

9,970

people attended social justice presentations and heard stories of hope and inspiration through our advocacy events, Worth A Second Chance presentations, Western Sydney schools and community engagement or Just Voices programs.

9,346

people engaged with place-based support or ecological justice research and projects through the Centre for Just Places, the Ecological Justice Hub, and capacity building activities in Northern Territory and Western Sydney.

7,912

people joined us to unpack The Man Box, prevent child sexual assault, or participate in other gender justice promotion and early intervention activities through The Men's Project presentations and events.

Highlights

CENTRE FOR JUST PLACES

Nine Yarra neighbourhood houses join forces to strengthen local climate resilience

Nine Yarra Neighbourhood Houses gathered in October 2023 to launch a plan to reduce their environmental footprint and support the local community to adapt to climate change.

Neighbourhood Houses are among the first to step up during community crises such as dealing with the impacts of extreme weather, and are key responders to community members experiencing ongoing vulnerability – yet they themselves aren't often well-prepared for the impacts of climate change.

By improving the resilience and response of Neighbourhood Houses to climate impacts, we can ensure they are better placed to sustainably meet the needs of vulnerable community members. This work is central to Jesuit Social Services' vision of a just society, where the most vulnerable are supported in ways that also promote social equity and long-term community well-being.

Across six months, Jesuit Social Services' Centre for Just Places, in collaboration with City of Yarra, supported the network of Houses to design a collaborative climate action and resilience plan for the network. The plan is an extension of the Centre's work building climate resilience in community services and councils across Melbourne – including work with Springvale and North Dandenong Neighbourhood Houses and the Darebin Neighbourhood House Network.

Tony Milne, Executive Officer of Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre, described the plan as, "a beacon of collective, community-driven action towards a sustainable and resilient future".

The Yarra Neighbourhood Houses recognised they were already doing a great deal with their communities that they could build on to mitigate climate change and care for the environment. They shared examples of this work, from the exciting moment when a new 'frog bog' attracted its first frog, to the more than 36,000 kilograms of waste diverted from landfill at Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre.



The plan addresses a range of considerations for building both climate resilient houses and communities – including increasing emergency preparedness, continuing to strengthen local support networks and decrease social isolation through programs and events, providing opportunities for learning about climate impacts and preparedness through new and existing programs and projects, and investigating the role of Neighbourhood Houses to be part of a network of safe spaces during extreme weather.

It also lays out actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and build more sustainable houses – this includes continuing to reduce community waste, developing an ecological and social justice procurement policy, and providing sustainable living and climate action education to communities.

FLEMINGTON HOMEWORK CLUB

Homework Club's annual Iftar event continues to bring the community closer

Flemington Homework Club, an out-of-school-hours learning support program for students living on or around the Flemington public housing estate, welcomed more than 115 participants, families, staff members and volunteers to its annual Iftar dinner event.

At Kensington Town Hall in inner-city Melbourne, children as young as three gathered round a large table where glitter pens, Ramadan themed colouring pages and games spilled over the edges.

Amidst the buzz of artistic chaos, Tartiel, a participant of Jesuit Social Services' Homework Club program since Grade 1, now in Year 9, mentioned, "the worst part about Homework Club is the homework! I love everything else. I get to hang out and play with my friends, and

I also think the people who help us are really kind."

Aya, a mother of three, echoed her sentiment.

"I think the best thing about Homework Club is that, yes, they help with the work, but really they are just kind with the kids," she said.

"They really care about them."

Running for over 20 years, Homework Club is aimed at both navigating and overcoming the various educational obstacles that families from migrant and refugee backgrounds might face. These may stem from language barriers, literacy limitations, resource disparities or unfamiliarity with the Australian schooling system. Regardless, the program and its volunteers firmly believe that nothing should hinder children from reaching their full potential.

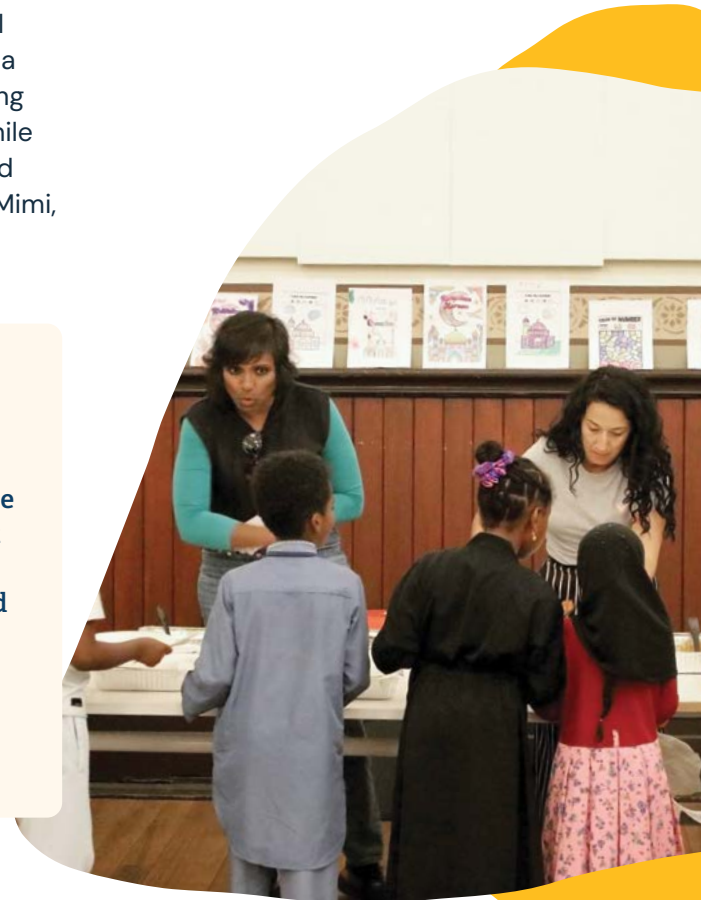
Beyond educational support, the program strives to establish meaningful connections with the families it supports, recognising the importance of community in helping

navigate the many challenges of settling into a new country.

"The kids, the mums, the chats with volunteers, I feel it is one of the most special programs at Jesuit Social Services. You are able to involve a whole community actively working to improve children's learning while making newly arrived migrant and refugee parents welcome," said Mimi, Settlement Support Worker with Jesuit Social Services.

"To me, Homework Club embodies what we as an organisation are trying to achieve by bringing everyone together like this, it's about creating opportunities for meaningful connections and encounters between Australians from all walks of life."

Mimi
Settlement Support Worker



Highlights

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING CONNECT

Helping Donna and Shayne make a contribution beyond their family

Donna and Shayne's 23-year-old daughter, Jasmine, has autism, and associated mental health and mood problems – frequently experiencing anxiety, particularly when her life lacks structure and order.

"Unfortunately, most people don't understand her challenges," said Donna.

"It's a real issue."

Donna and Shayne's full-time roles as carers to Jasmine saw them nominated for the lived experience reference group for Western Metro Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect – Jesuit Social Services' new resource and support hub for carers of people experiencing mental health and/or substance misuse issues.

The 2021 Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System recommended that Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect hubs be established to provide free services, and a warm and welcoming space to the estimated 60,000 Victorians providing care.

The involvement of those with lived experience of care is a key feature of each hub.

"The hub's approach is an extension of the way Jesuit Social Services works," said Leanne Acreman, General Manager – Housing and Complex Needs. "Therefore, we tailor our services to meet the unique needs of this group, treating individuals with respect and listening to them throughout their journey."

"It's not just about what we deliver, it's how we go about doing that."

Alongside seven other carers, Donna and Shayne attend monthly meetings, where they advise staff on everything from program design to

the art on the walls. This ensures that the hub is a welcoming, non-clinical space, providing services that will be genuinely useful to carers.

Though Donna and Shayne aren't users of the service – their involvement in the hub is with its reference group only – they say the hub has given them new value and purpose.



"The thing is, when you're a husband and wife, you look after each other; that's just our responsibility. But when we come here, we're stepping out of that role, and we're looking at how we can help other carers. It has given us the opportunity to contribute beyond our family."

Shayne

Carer and lived experience reference group member



OPEN PANTRY, WESTERN SYDNEY

Empowering Western Sydney: responding to community voices

In Western Sydney, the focus is not just on working for the community but working with them, listening to their voices, and responding to their specific needs. This region, rich in cultural diversity yet facing significant social challenges, exemplifies a commitment to building a just society through deep community engagement.

The Willmot Community Hub, a welcoming and vibrant space in the heart of Western Sydney, plays a crucial role in accompanying individuals, families and the broader community to help them flourish. By working in collaboration with local residents and other community organisations, the Hub ensures that its efforts are tailored, targeted and impactful.

The weekly playgroup for young families is a lively space where children engage in social and developmental activities while parents build close relationships.

“We have mums who have met each other in the group and now are really close friends,” said Delander, Acting Manager of Western Sydney Programs.

Local community input has been instrumental in shaping the health and wellbeing services offered at the Hub. The Nutty Knitters group provides a creative outlet and social space for older women, with Delander noting, “it is a time where they are the priority and they have the opportunity to just be themselves”. The Hub’s Thursday Men’s Group and Friday parenting course further support emotional wellbeing and family development, offering spaces where individuals can connect and grow.

The introduction of a podiatrist came after residents expressed a need for accessible healthcare, particularly for foot care.

“Having a podiatrist here means I don’t have to travel far. It’s been a huge help, especially because my feet are my livelihood.”

Community Member



Jess and Chandelle from our Currawong Kitchen

In the neighbouring suburb of Emerton, our Ignite Food Store is another example of responding to community need. It offers affordable, nutritious food to those who need it most. “We needed a place where we could get healthy food without feeling like we were taking charity,” one resident explained. “We wanted to contribute to something sustainable, and that’s exactly what we’ve done with Ignite. It’s ours, and that sense of ownership changes everything.”

The impact of this community-driven approach is clear. As one local leader summed up, “the best part about all this is that it’s based on what we’ve said we need. It feels good to know that our voices are being heard and that the programs are making a real difference in our lives”.

Hearts, minds
and systems
changed
towards love
and justice



Overview

Through evidence-informed direct advocacy to decision-makers and public-facing community engagement, we address the policy and practice barriers that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion – encouraging and enabling governments to implement effective and humane policies and practices, so that all members of our community can flourish.



“We believe that change can be achieved when the interrelated root causes of disadvantage are understood and place-based solutions are properly resourced.”

Excerpt from our Federal Pre-Budget submission

419,704

opportunities generated to drive social change by extending our advocacy to the community through avenues such as media releases, policy submissions, stories of humanity and justice, digital communication channels, and interactive websites in 2023–24.

52,289 more than 2022–23, or a 14.23 per cent increase

76,289

views of our program pages on our Jesuit Social Services website.

19,128 more than 2022–23

49,909

views of our media releases, stories, submissions, and more on our website.

12,690 more than 2022–23

38,184

inboxes reached by our advocacy appeals.

19,327 more than 2022–23

12,445

people reached through developing resources, reports, and networks through the Centre for Just Places ecological justice and place-based initiatives.

36,142

views of our dedicated advocacy websites – *Dropping Off The Edge*, *Worth A Second Chance*, and *Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum*.

72,358

people reached through our Facebook and LinkedIn posts to build a just society.

11,476 more than 2022–23



Statistics are indicative and not totals

Gender justice

Our advocacy in 2023–24 included policy submissions to the *Inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria*, the Australian Law Reform Commission’s *Inquiry into Justice Responses to Sexual Violence*, and the Federal Government’s *National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality*.

These submissions echo our long-standing calls to address the root causes of men’s violence against women and children through tackling the harmful attitudes and behaviours of some boys and men.

In early 2024, Jesuit Social Services released the largest Australian study into men’s perceptions of, and belief in, rigid masculine norms.

The Man Box 2024: Re-examining what it means to be a man in Australia surveyed a nationally representative sample of over 3,500 participants aged 18 to 45. The study found that Australian men who most strongly endorse rigid attitudes related to masculinity are more likely to have used violence, sexually

abused their partner, sexually harassed women, experienced poor mental health, and displayed problematic gambling behaviours.

The research also revealed that a significant number of Australian men feel pressure to conform to a rigid, limiting and often harmful template of masculinity called The Man Box, a set of norms that place pressure on men to be a certain way – to be tough, not to show emotion, to be the breadwinner, be in control, use violence to get respect, and to have many sexual partners.

On average, a quarter of the 18–to 45-year-old men surveyed personally agreed with these rules – which lead to a greater likelihood of perpetrating violence and experiencing poorer outcomes for their mental health and wellbeing.

“These Man Box pressures tell men to be tough, fight back, never say no to sex and avoid household chores. It boxes men in and limits their potential. Our research finds that when men believe these rules, the results can be devastating for people in their lives, particularly women, as well as for men themselves,” said Matt Tyler.



“Our Man Box research sheds new light on what Australian men believe about what a ‘real man’ thinks, feels and does, and the negative impacts of believing in outdated ideas of masculinity.”

Matt Tyler
Executive Director – Community and Systems Impact, Jesuit Social Services

The Man Box 2024 was the third report featuring The Men’s Project’s research into the consequences of Man Box pressures, first published in 2018 and modelled on Equimundo’s The Man Box study.

Respect Victoria, the state agency focusing on preventing violence against women and family violence, supported Jesuit Social Services in the development of the report.



“To prevent violence against women and family violence we need to understand the harmful forms of masculinity that can drive it. This research is critical to understanding how we prevent men’s violence, and how men can be supported to challenge dangerous ideas about what it means to be a man.”

Kate Fitz-Gibbon
Chair, Respect Victoria

The report included a series of detailed recommendations spanning four areas: policy change, workforce capacity-building, community awareness raising and future research.

We officially launched *The Man Box 2024* study at The Wheeler Centre and online in February 2024. The event was attended by more than 441 people and attendees heard from Jesuit Social Services CEO, Julie Edwards, Respect Victoria Chair, Professor Kate Fitz-Gibbon, Executive Director of Community and Systems Impact, Matt Tyler, Dr Michael Flood, and a panel of experts: Michael Hail (The Men’s Project), Dr Todd Fernando (Former Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+

Communities), Hala Abdelnour (Institute of non-violence) and Lula Demele (Victim-Survivor Advocate).

We achieved prominent coverage of the study by major media outlets including The Age, ABC, SBS and AAP. The study was covered by more than 100 radio stations across the country, and helped to solidify the organisation’s position as a leading expert on gender justice.

1,299

people participated
in Unpacking the Man
Box sessions



Climate justice

Our climate justice advocacy in 2023–24 included policy submissions to the Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill 2023 and the National Adaptation Plan Issues Paper.

Climate justice was featured in our policy submission to the Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework, calling for a federal Human Rights Act, where we noted:

“It is the responsibility and legacy of this generation to limit the extent and impact of climate change to ensure that children in future generations have the opportunity to live in a safe and healthy environment.”

We met with a range of federal and state Ministers, MPs and decision-makers in relation to climate justice, and it was a key policy priority in our submission ahead of the Northern Territory 2024 election.

PRISONS, CLIMATE AND A JUST TRANSITION

Prisons, climate and a just transition

On a 38-degree December day in the middle of the desert, 15 people incarcerated at Alice Springs Correctional Centre used t-shirts and pedestal fans to rip a hole in a ceiling, in a desperate attempt to escape the stifling heat of their overcrowded cells.

The incident reignited calls to provide air conditioning in prison – one recommendation of the Northern Territory Ombudsman, and firmly in step with the Territory's human rights obligations to people deprived of their liberty.

Jesuit Social Services supports the urgent need to provide air conditioning in a facility that the Ombudsman has described as worsening the already “notoriously challenging” environmental conditions, which are only expected to deteriorate further with climate change.

This is one example of how climate change intersects with criminal justice. Justice systems must adapt

to protect people from extreme heat. Air-conditioning Alice Springs Correctional Centre would be one small step towards a systemwide transition away from harmful and ineffective practices that disproportionately impact those most marginalised in society.

Across the country, recidivism rates underline that the justice system is not working and that incarceration is an expensive failure. In Northern Territory, for example, a 56 per cent recidivism rate means that people who enter prison are more likely than not to re-offend after leaving. As climate conditions become more extreme and prison populations grow, incarcerated people will endure increasingly inhumane conditions meanwhile the outcome of shifting behaviour that the broader community wants to see will not be achieved.

Jesuit Social Services' discussion paper, *Prisons, climate and a just transition*, articulated the overlapping social and ecological harms done by our criminal justice systems.

Jesuit Social Services supports a move away from the overuse of prisons; we have called on all Australian governments to fully implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which would help ensure humane standards inside prisons.

Ultimately, Jesuit Social Services seeks a just transition away from inequitable economic and social systems towards a more sustainable world. Policies need to be in place to mitigate the impacts of climate change on those most vulnerable, including those caught up in the criminal justice system.

Alliance key to climate justice in the Northern Territory

The Northern Territory is on the frontline of intensifying heat, extreme weather events and rising sea levels. Remote communities and homelands across the Territory are particularly at risk of these impacts with many Aboriginal communities already facing food insecurity, a lack of safe drinking water, and lack of access to reliable and affordable electricity.



“The ecosystems in the Northern Territory are among the most rapidly deteriorating in Australia – the savanna woodlands and mangroves are careening towards extinction. Climate change is impacting our lives in more ways than we know; building knowledge and awareness is a crucial step to action.”

Ned Bible

Northern Territory Climate
Justice Coordinator

This understanding prompted Jesuit Social Services to help establish a Territory-based Climate Justice Alliance in 2021. Facilitated by Jesuit Social Services, the Climate Justice Alliance includes a number of climate, environmental, and community-led organisations, as well as unions.

Over 18 months, the Alliance built relationships across the Territory and ran a series of workshops and forums in Alice Springs and Darwin. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the work of the Alliance slowed, but has now reconvened with renewed energy and vigour to work towards justice for all.

The aim of the Alliance is to help build climate literacy among the community sector and the broader community in the Northern Territory.

“We’ve all heard of climate change,” explained Ned, “but we understand there can be obstacles to people taking action, including a lack of understanding of climate science and feeling overwhelmed in the face of such a monumental problem.”

“Climate literacy refers to people’s level of knowledge and awareness of climate change, and its impacts.

People already facing disadvantage are particularly likely to be impacted by climate change, yet least likely able to influence change.”

Today, the Alliance continues to build on this important work and strives towards a just transition – one that focuses on adapting to the impacts of climate change, and on the alternative economic futures needed to ensure justice for people and the planet.

The Alliance wants to see climate change planning and adaptation integrated into the strategic planning of local governments, community services, community health and other local organisations.

People who live with disability are two to four times more likely to be injured or killed in an extreme weather event due to existing health inequities and a lack of access to decision-making that is responsive to their needs. These sector-specific facts can help organisations understand the breadth and depth of climate risks, and plan accordingly, for the wellbeing of the people they work with and the planet.

To be effective, ecological justice must be inclusive, community-led, and place-based. The Climate Justice Alliance embodies these principles to advocate for justice in the Northern Territory.



Youth justice

Jesuit Social Services is a long-term advocate for an evidence-based, humane and restorative justice system, with more than four decades of experience seeking solutions and working with people intersecting with the justice system, as well as their families and communities.

A small number of young people enter the criminal justice system from a young age, often the ones who have faced the toughest circumstances growing up. The most effective approach to prevent their entry into the justice system is to address the issues driving their vulnerability such as family dysfunction, trauma, abuse and neglect.

Early intervention to divert children from detention is crucial for preventing paths into youth and adult justice systems. Legislation for children and young people in all jurisdictions should prioritise early intervention and non-custodial strategies.

In our submission to the National Children's Commissioner Youth Justice and Child Wellbeing Reform across Australia project, and in our Federal Budget 2024 submission, we called for a national framework to provide a common legislative approach to youth justice and child wellbeing reform in Australia.

For this, we suggested the establishment of a National Youth Justice Strategy to provide a national policy framework to guide early intervention, prevention and targeted prevention for children and young people at risk of offending.

In 2023–24, we continued our work to shift political and public attitudes in relation to youth justice in Victoria and the Northern Territory, and called on governments to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14.

We corresponded and met with Victorian Ministers, MPs and decision-makers in relation to youth justice, and collaborated with partners through the Smart Justice for Young People coalition in Victoria.

As Victoria committed to raising the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12 years, making it the first Australian state to do so, we continued our strong public advocacy in support of this evidence-based reform, including regular media interviews with print, radio and TV outlets.

In the Northern Territory, we collaborated with the community sector through Central Australian Youth Justice (CAYJ), and articulated and disseminated our policy priorities for the Northern Territory that included a strong focus on youth justice reform.



Spotlight: Youth Justice in Victoria and Northern Territory

626

participants supported through our Victorian and Northern Territory Youth Justice programs

240

Group Conferences were completed with 1,050 attendees including the young person, victims, police, family or other community members

3,775

contacts to support family or community connectedness were recorded

92%

of participants in Restorative Justice conferences demonstrated increased empathy for the victims of their offences

79%

of participants had no known, or reduced severity or frequency of offending since working with Jesuit Social Services

77%

of participants demonstrated improved connection to family or significant others

Child sexual abuse prevention

The first nationally representative research into the prevalence among Australian men of child sexual offending behaviours and attitudes has shed unprecedented light on sexually abusive behaviours and feelings.

Released by Jesuit Social Services and the University of New South Wales in November 2023, the study revealed that, in relation to the community sample surveyed, one in five Australian men reported sexual feelings towards children and/or have sexually offended against children; with one-third of that group motivated to access help.

The largest global study of its kind, *Identifying and Understanding Child Sexual Offending Behaviour and Attitudes among Australian Men*, examined the prevalence of risk behaviours and attitudes related to child sexual offending. It surveyed a representative sample of 1,945 Australian men aged 18 to over 65.

“This study brings unprecedented visibility to the numbers of undetected child sex offenders in

the Australian community,” said lead investigator Associate Professor Michael Salter.

“This study affirms what countless survivors have said – that the men who abused them were well connected and relatively wealthy, and whose behaviour is secretive and easily overlooked... it is our hope that this research can be the catalyst for change to ultimately keep children safe.”

The study found that around one in six Australian men reports sexual feelings towards children, and around one in 10 Australian men has sexually offended against children.

Around half of the men in this group were more likely to be married, work with children, and have higher incomes compared to those with no sexual feelings or offenses against children. They also reported higher levels of anxiety, depression, and binge drinking, and were more likely to have experienced sexual abuse or other adverse childhood experiences, be active online (including on social media, encrypted apps, and cryptocurrency), and consume violent or bestiality-related pornography.

The report affirms the importance of the prevention of child sexual abuse, calling on investment from governments and the private sector to address the risk factors contributing to sexual offending and reoffending in order to reduce sexual violence against children.

“The prevalence of abuse revealed in this report is deeply concerning,” Georgia Naldrett, Manager of Jesuit Social Services’ Stop it Now! Australia service said.

“Our detailed and evidence-based recommendations call for investment in initiatives that address concerning behaviour before it starts, intervene earlier with boys and men who report troubling thoughts and behaviours, and reduce the reoffending risk of those who have already sexually abused children. Investment in these areas can help keep children safe from harm.”



15,566

unique visitors to the Stop It Now! Australia child sexual abuse prevention website

More of our advocacy work

Over the past year we have made 14 policy submissions to influence positive social change and help build a just society.

One major piece of work was our submission to the **National Disability Insurance Scheme Review** (NDIS), where we highlighted the need for the scheme to adequately support people with multiple and complex needs, including people in contact with the justice system and people who face complex trauma.

Another key submission was our response to the proposed **National Housing and Homelessness Plan**. We raised the need for more sustainable, climate-safe and holistic public and social housing across Australia, as well as more targeted approaches to homelessness prevention.

Other notable contributions include our submissions to the **Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework**, calling for a federal Human Rights Act, and the **Multicultural Framework Review**.

We undertook strategic advocacy and communications on key legislative and policy changes including in relation to the **2023 Referendum on an Aboriginal Voice to Parliament**.

As always, our pre-budget submissions leading up to the **Federal and Victorian 2024–25 budgets** called for a range of measures we believe are critical and achievable to deliver real change for people facing disadvantage.



During Homelessness Week, we hosted a solutions-focused forum about challenges and opportunities in housing with key stakeholders and decision-makers

Events

2024 Annual Dinner

Over 200 guests gathered at Melbourne Cricket Ground on 1 March 2024 for Jesuit Social Services' Annual Dinner, emphasising community and connection. Following an Acknowledgement of Country, and a powerful Grace before the meal delivered by Lisa Sully, the event's flagship Frank Costigan QC address was delivered by Jesuit Social Services' outgoing Chair Patricia Faulkner AO. This was her last official engagement with the organisation she spent 17 years involved with, 16 of them as Chair.

“It is the unwavering courage, commitment and energy Jesuit Social Services has always had for working with people who are deeply disadvantaged, and working on unpopular causes, that has kept me here for 17 years.”

Patricia Faulkner AO
Outgoing Chair of the Board



Patricia highlighted that Jesuit Social Services' supporters play a critical role in using their circles of influence to change the trajectory of people the organisation supports.

Following Patricia's address, CEO Julie Edwards praised supporters for influencing policy changes, such as raising Victoria's age of criminal

responsibility. The evening's program was rounded out by a performance by Allara, a musician who is a participant of the organisation's Artful Dodgers Studios, an open-access studio for young people who experience barriers to social inclusion.

Launch of Western Metro Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect

Jesuit Social Services launched the Western Metro Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect centre in Sunshine in June 2024 – a direct response to a recommendation from the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System (2021).

The event included official remarks from Parliamentary Secretary Tim Richardson, who officially opened

the centre, and Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioner of Lived Experience, Jacqueline Gibson. The opening was widely attended by service providers and government representatives, including local Council members.

CEO Julie Edwards emphasised the centre’s importance for carers: “We’ve learnt how often families and carers are left out of the picture, their needs are not understood, recognised and responded to.”



Freedom to live for refugees and people seeking asylum – webinar

In September 2023, as part of the Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA)’s National Week of Prayer and Action, the campaign hosted a webinar. The event explored the theme ‘freedom to live for refugees and people seeking asylum’ with speakers and experts Sara Muzamil (Jesuit Refugee Service Australia), Ben Doherty (Guardian Australia), Zaki Haidari (Amnesty International Australia) and Tamara Domicelj (Jesuit Refugee Service Australia).

Fundraising

In the financial year 2023–24, our donors demonstrated remarkable generosity with contributions totalling more than \$2.24 million through our appeals, regular giving, workplace giving, event donations, bequests and other donations.

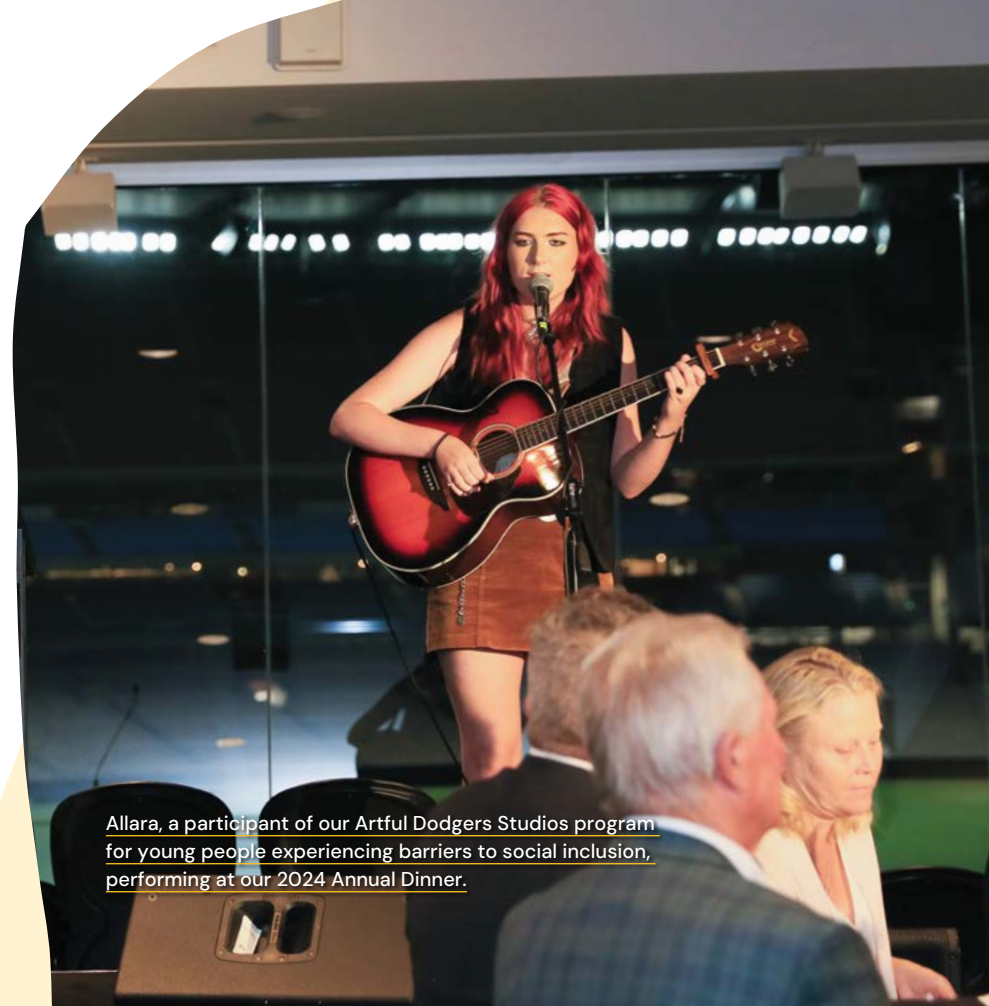
We deeply appreciate the support from philanthropic individuals and organisations, whose contributions amounted to more than **\$1.85 million for our new and existing initiatives, and organisational capacity building.**

Jesuit Social Services is profoundly grateful for the generosity of our bequestors, whose contributions enable us to continue accompanying and advocating for those facing the most entrenched disadvantage.

Thank you!

\$4.09

million dollars raised to enable us to support those most entrenched in disadvantage



Allara, a participant of our Artful Dodgers Studios program for young people experiencing barriers to social inclusion, performing at our 2024 Annual Dinner.

A reflection from a Fundraising Officer on the Feast Day of St Ignatius of Loyola

In my work I'll sometimes chat and email with our donors. Some give regularly to us, and have done so for many years without fail. Some started giving to Jesuit Social Services when I was still in primary school. Others, who we may not have known before, surprise us with their gift – they've heard about a particular program, or how we're making interventions to address some of the many factors causing disadvantage for so many.

Like our faithful longer-term supporters, I hear that our new supporters really believe in what we are doing here. They believe we're engaged in meaningful, effective and important work, that we're committed to our mission to bring about a better world where all people can flourish. They want to partner with us in being participants in a solution. They know they have received in life – and they want to 'return it'.

Sometimes I'll ask what led someone to choose to support Jesuit Social Services. Some might say: "I've always loved the Jesuits", "The Jesuits have been good to my family" or, "I was educated by the Jesuits". It's always lovely to hear. It is an honour, and while they're singing praises of the Jesuits, I feel embarrassed to be accepting someone else's praise, but then, I consider that Jesuit Social Services is a living community that I AM a part of, and that we do proudly celebrate our Jesuit roots and Ignatian heritage. Perhaps I can also take pleasure in the praise.

Many conversations reveal that people have had a real experience of something: an encounter with a way of being, a way of looking at the world, that compels them to give now – to entrust their money with us to use in ways they believe to be worthwhile and good. What is it that they have encountered? What is it of our Ignatian tradition that has stayed with them? Who are the people they have encountered? What personal experiences of "God in all things" has been sustained such that they feel a tie to our organisation?



Mass celebrating the Feast Day of St Ignatius of Loyola



"I hear that it is their gratitude for their experience that compels them to give – in return. They have received, they are grateful, and they want to return it."

**Jesuit Social Services
Fundraising Officer**

News and milestones

Jesuit Social Services gets the 'Rainbow Tick'

Former Jesuit Social Services staff member, Alex, was one of several team members who led the organisation towards Rainbow Tick accreditation over the last four years.

"Rainbow Tick is a quality framework that helps organisations like ours show that they are safe, inclusive and affirming for both current and potential LGBTIQ+ staff, volunteers and participants," Alex said.

An important part of achieving Rainbow Tick is ensuring staff are trained in LGBTIQ+ inclusion.


"Jesuit Social Services is a Catholic organisation that prides itself on being welcoming to LGBTIQ+ people. Rainbow Tick is a good way to signal that we are continuing to do the work to ensure we are safe and inclusive."

Alex Fraser
Jesuit Social Services former team member

"To be able to achieve the standards you need to have at least 80 per cent of staff and volunteers do LGBTIQ+ inclusion training. We created our own training – bringing in staff and volunteers to share their experiences both as LGBTIQ+ people working at the organisation, and as practitioners working with LGBTIQ+ participants," Alex said.

"The auditors interviewed participants, board members and staff at all levels, reviewed our documentation, and assessed our visual environment. We were successful against all the standards on our first attempt, which was amazing!" Alex said.

While the organisation is now accredited, the work doesn't stop here. For Jesuit Social Services it's not only about having the Tick.

"It's about ensuring that we are, and can demonstrate that we are, safe and inclusive. We'll be reassessed every three years, which will help us maintain and grow our commitment to the work."



Proud to be named an inclusive employer

In 2023, Jesuit Social Services was named on a list of Australian organisations leading the way in diversity and inclusion. Diversity Council Australia, an independent not-for-profit peak body, tracks the state of inclusion in the Australian workforce through its Inclusive Employers Index. Jesuit Social Services was listed on the 2023–24 Index, which recognises organisations demonstrating a higher level of dedication to diversity and inclusion than the broader Australian workforce.

Respecting diversity is central to Jesuit Social Services' vision of a just society, where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential. For 47 years, we have stood alongside some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised individuals, many of whom face inequality, prejudice, and exclusion. Achieving our vision demands that our workplace and services not only reflect but actively embrace diversity and inclusion.

The staff's assessment revealed that Jesuit Social Services employs people with a disability, those with caring responsibilities, women, and LGBTQIA+ people at higher rates than the broader Australian workforce. In fact, 21 per cent of Jesuit Social Services' staff are LGBTQIA+, compared with 11 per cent of the Australian workforce. Sixty eight per cent are women, compared with 48 per cent of the Australian workforce, and 11 per cent have a disability compared to nine per cent of the Australian workforce.

Jesuit Social Services is in the first year of implementing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy, has completed its second (Innovate) Reconciliation Action Plan and is now developing its Reconciliation and Justice Action Plan.


“Being listed on the Inclusive Employers Index demonstrates we are on the right track when it comes to diversity and inclusion, but the work doesn't stop here. Jesuit Social Services will continue to grow our commitment to this work over the coming years.”
Julie Edwards
CEO, Jesuit Social Services



Governance

Jesuit Social Services Ltd is a work of the Australian Jesuit Province, operating as an incorporated organisation under an independent and voluntary Board of Directors.

Legal status

Jesuit Social Services' legal status is defined as:

- A company limited by guarantee;
- A registered charity holding an endorsement for charity tax;
- Holding Deductible Gift Recipient Level 1;
- With Concessions and Public Benevolent Institution status, allowing tax deductions for donations; and
- Fringe Benefit Tax exempt.

Governance structure

Eight non-executive Directors currently make up the Jesuit Social Services Board. Directors receive no remuneration for their role on the Board and accept full responsibility for the governance of the organisation, in accordance

with Australian Corporations Law, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit legislation, and community standards. You can meet our Board overleaf.

The Board sets the strategic direction and oversees the performance of the organisation. Good corporate governance is a fundamental part of the culture and business practices of Jesuit Social Services, and the Board has adopted formal governance practices and processes. The Board Committee structure is an integral part of this practice, and includes the:

- Strategic Planning and Fundraising Committee
- Governance Committee
- Risk and Finance Committee
- Education Committee
- People, Practice and Quality Committee
- Property Committee.

These Committees are comprised of both representatives from the Board and other individuals with expertise in their respective fields.

Effective and transparent governance

The Board's composition and performance are reviewed regularly to ensure it has the appropriate mix of skills and experience and is operating in an effective manner.

New Directors receive an induction into the organisation, and all Directors participate in an ongoing development program concerning their role, responsibilities, our Ignatian heritage, and the work of Jesuit Social Services.

An individual Director will not participate in decision making processes if any potential conflict of interest is likely to arise. The Board supports open and transparent communication with stakeholders, while maintaining as imperative the confidentiality of program participants.



“Our Board plays a crucial role in steering Jesuit Social Services towards our vision of building a just society.”

Julie Edwards
CEO, Jesuit Social Services

Board

Jesuit Social Services is led by an independent Board of volunteers whose governance provides accountability and oversight.



**Patricia Faulkner AO,
Chair of the Board
(until March 2024)**

[LIVES ON BUNURONG LAND](#)

Following a 17-year association with Jesuit Social Services, including 16 years as Board Chair, Patricia Faulkner AO resigned from the Board in March 2024. In addition to her role on the Jesuit Social Services Board, during the reporting period Patricia was also Chair of the Melbourne Academic Centre for Health Council, Deputy Chair of the Melbourne Theatre Company, a Director and Chair of Plan International Australia, and a Director of AWARE Super and Caritas Australia.

Patricia has held a diverse range of senior leadership positions, including serving as a Deputy Commissioner to the 2016 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, Director of Consumer Affairs Victoria, Director of Occupational Health and Safety, and Secretary of the Department of Human Services. She previously held senior health leadership roles at KPMG and is a Fellow of the Australian College of Health Services Executives and a National Fellow of IPAA.

Patricia was awarded an Order of Australia in 2008 for service to the community through the development and implementation of public policy relating to health, aged care, children's services, disability services and housing.

Until February 2024, Patricia was also Chair of the Board's Property Committee, Governance Committee, and Strategic Planning and Fundraising Committee.

**Francis Sullivan AO,
Chair of the Board
(from March 2024)**

[LIVES ON NGUNNAWAL LAND](#)

Francis brings extensive experience in health, education and social policy and governance to his role as Chair of the Jesuit Social Services Board, commencing his appointment in March 2024.



Francis is an effective leader and change agent in public policy and reform across a range of areas, from his time as CEO of Catholic Health Australia and then Secretary General with the Australian Medical Association through to his leadership of the Truth, Justice and Healing Council, coordinating the Catholic Church's response to the recommendation of the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse.

Francis initially trained as an educator before moving into healthcare administration, and his experience includes responding to violence against children, mental health, refugees and First Nations peoples. Following retirement from his executive career, Francis has taken on several governance roles, including Chair of Mater Hospitals and Chair of Catholic Social Services Australia. Francis is also currently an independent director on the Mercy Health Australia Board and an adjunct professor at the Australian Catholic University.

In 2020, Francis was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for his 'distinguished service to the community, particularly through social justice and legislative reform initiatives, and to health and aged care'.

Francis also Chairs the Board's Governance Committee, and Strategic Planning and Fundraising Committee (from March 2024).

Board



**Christiana
McCudden**

LIVES ON WURUNDJERI WOI
WURRUNG LAND

Member and Chair
(from March 2024) of
the Board's Property
Committee, member
of the Risk and Finance
Committee

Christiana practises in commercial litigation and regulatory matters, employing her highly strategic approach to advise and represent her clients within the specific context of their business and industry. With extensive experience in state and federal court proceedings, Royal Commissions and inquiries, she has handled cases involving breach of warranties and directors' duties, contract disputes, ACL and negligence claims, tortious actions, unconscionable conduct, misrepresentation, and regulatory investigations.

Separate from her work in private practice, Christiana has worked as the deputy CEO of the Hope Vale Aboriginal Council in the Cape York region of Queensland in 2003 and was part of the Victorian Law Reform Commission team on the Civil Justice Review pursuant to terms of reference from the Victorian Government.



**Patrick
Allen**

LIVES ON WURUNDJERI WOI
WURRUNG LAND

Member of the Board's
Education Committee

Pat is a criminal defence lawyer and qualified social worker. His law firm, Patrick Allen Law, predominantly represents children and young adults. Prior to being a lawyer, Pat worked for a decade in various fields including child protection, youth justice, community development and homelessness. Pat was also previously an employee of Jesuit Social Services and he was educated by the Jesuits for eight years at Xavier College in Melbourne.



**Justin
Lachal**

LIVES ON WURUNDJERI WOI
WURRUNG LAND

Chair of the Board's
Risk and Finance
Committee

Justin has more than 20 years' experience in the accounting and finance sector, including roles with KPMG and the ANZ Banking Group. Justin is a fellow of the Chartered Accountants and holds Masters degrees in Business Information Technology, Applied Finance and Business Administration. Justin is currently on the Board of the Sunraysia Institute of Technical and Further Education (SuniTAFE) and is Chief Financial Officer of The Salvation Army.



Sr Libby Rogerson IBVM

LIVES ON CAMMERAYGAL LAND

Member of the Board's Strategic Planning and Fundraising Committee and People, Practice and Quality Committee (until February 2024)

Sister Libby Rogerson IBVM is a Loreto sister with extensive involvement in refugee advocacy. Between 1999 and 2009, Libby was Coordinator of Social Justice and Director of Caritas in the Diocese of Parramatta, where she helped found the House of Welcome refugee and asylum seeker service. Libby is a member of the Loreto Justice Network Committee and is a Director of Mary Ward International Australia. Libby was also a member of the Loreto Sisters' Province Council until November 2023.



Julia Griffith PSM

LIVES ON WURUNDJERI WOI WURRUNG LAND

Chair of the Board's People, Practice and Quality Committee

Julia has more than 30 years' experience in the Victorian public service, spanning senior and executive leadership roles across a range of justice portfolios including youth justice, policing, corrections, crime prevention, victim services and the infringements system. Julia was notably responsible for leading the Victorian Government's employment programs for disadvantaged jobseekers and redeveloping its child protection placement and support services. She retired from the role of Deputy Commissioner of the Victorian Public Sector Commission in January 2022.

During the reporting period, Julia was also Chairperson of the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority and a Director of Kids Under Cover.



Lisa Brophy

LIVES ON WURUNDJERI WOI WURRUNG LAND

Member of the Board's People, Practice and Quality Committee

Lisa is Professor and Discipline Lead in Social Work and Social Policy at La Trobe University. Lisa is also an honorary principal research fellow in the Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health at the University of Melbourne. Lisa's professional background is in Social Work and she has a career long commitment to the mental health field of practice dating back to 1985. Lisa's research focus has been on people experiencing mental illness and psychosocial disability and their recovery, social inclusion and human rights. Lisa was a member of Victoria's Mental Health and Wellbeing Act Expert Advisory Group and is currently a sessional community member of the Victorian Mental Health Tribunal. In 2022 Lisa was appointed to the Board of the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing, and in 2023 Lisa was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. Lisa joined the Jesuit Social Services Board in March 2024.

Board



**Julian
Butler SJ**

Member and Chair (from May 2024) of the Board's Education Committee, member of the Property Committee

Julian joined the Jesuits in 2017 and during the reporting period was the Australian Jesuit's Provincial Assistant for Young Adult Ministry and was Chair of The Cardoner Network. Throughout 2023/2024 he worked as chaplain to senior students and recent graduates at Xavier College and as a contributor and editorial consultant at Jesuit Communications Australia. Julian chaired the Australian Jesuit Province's Governance, Risk & Compliance Policy Reference Group and was a member of the Province's Ministries Commission and Vocations Committee. Prior to joining the Jesuits, Julian practiced law, specialising in child protection and youth criminal defence.



**Dr Chris
Hayes**

Chair of the Board's Education Committee (until March 2024)

Chris is a renowned, highly successful and experienced Catholic educational leader, with a passion for providing a rich and nurturing Catholic education. Chris completed his Doctoral studies with the Australian Catholic University, exploring how Christian values can be authentically incorporated in pedagogy and the daily interactions between teachers and students in the classroom.

His distinguished leadership has consistently been characterised by prayer, generosity and a determined commitment to creative learning and improved academic outcomes for all students. Chris was previously Principal of Xavier College, St Edmund's College, Canberra and St Joseph's College Hunters Hill NSW. Chris resigned from the Jesuit Social Services Board in March 2024.



**Fr Frank
Brennan SJ AO**

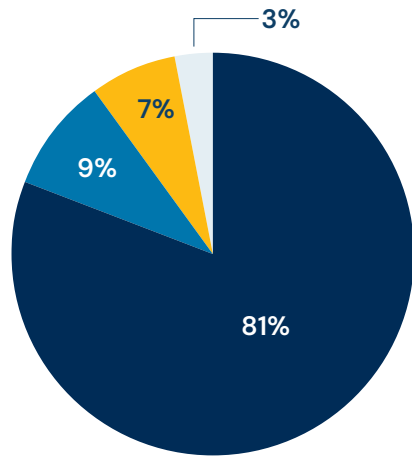
Member of the Board's Governance Committee (until November 2023)

Frank is a Jesuit priest who has variously worked as Rector of Newman College within The University of Melbourne, as a human rights lawyer, a professor of law at Australian Catholic University, and CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia. Frank is widely known to the Australian public through his long career of leadership and advocacy on a range of human rights and social justice issues relating to asylum seekers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged both in Australia and abroad. Frank resigned from the Jesuit Social Services Board in November 2023.

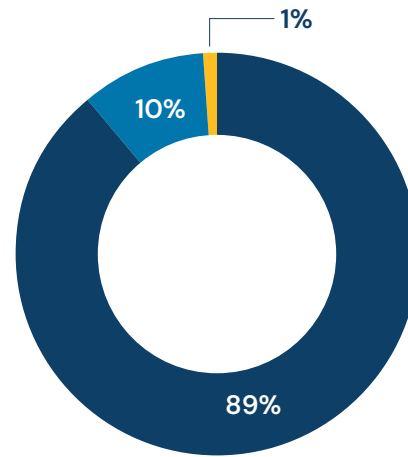
Financial summary

Total revenue was \$61,183,987, while total expense was \$47,618,832.

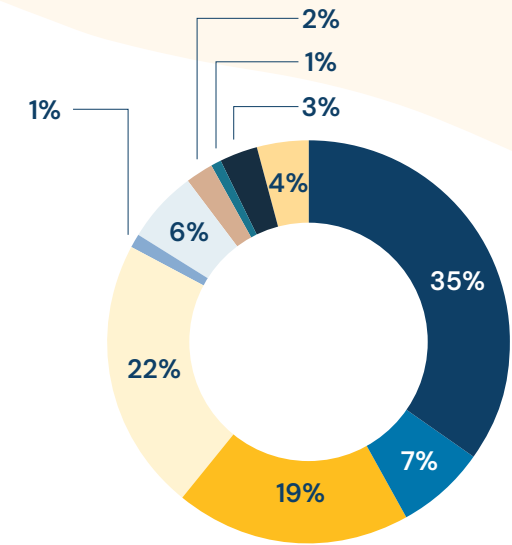
Revenue for the 2023–24 financial year was impacted by the sale of two of Jesuit Social Services' properties in Langridge Street, Collingwood and Dawson Street, Brunswick.



Revenue	%
Government income & grants	81%
All other	9%
Fundraising	7%
Trust and philanthropic grants	3%



Expenditure	%
Direct program	89%
Administration	10%
Fundraising	1%



Direct Program Expenditure	%
Justice	35%
Support After Suicide	7%
Education, Training & Employment	19%
Housing and Complex Needs	22%
Settlements	1%
Gender Justice	6%
Centre for Just Places	2%
Western Sydney	1%
Advocacy	3%
Ignatius Learning Centre	4%

Our programs and people

Our programs

Justice and reconciliation

- African Visitation and Mentoring Program (AVAMP)
- Back on Track
- Community Connections Mentoring
- Crime Prevention Projects
- Ignatius Learning Centre
- Link Youth Justice Housing Program
- Maribyrnong Community Residential Facility Transitional Support Program
- Next Steps and Dillon House
- Perry House
- Pivot
- ReConnect
- Youth Justice Community Support Service
- Youth Justice Group Conferencing (Victoria and NT)

Disability, mental health and wellbeing

- Artful Dodgers Studios
- Connexions
- Individual Support Program
- Specialist Support Coordination
- StandBy Support After Suicide

- Support After Suicide
- The Outdoor Experience
- Western Metro Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect

Education, training and employment

- Artful Dodgers Studios
- Corporate Diversity Partnerships
- Ecological Justice Hub
- Ignatius Learning Centre
- Ignite Café
- Jesuit Community College
- Jobs Victoria Employment Service
- JustWorks
- Navigator
- Skills First Reconnect
- Supporting New Futures
- Victoria Police Diversity Recruitment Program

Community and connection

- Homework Club
- Just Voices Speakers Program
- Northern Territory programs
- Settlement program
- Western Sydney programs

Housing and support

- Link Youth Justice Housing Program
- Maribyrnong Community Residential Facility Transitional Support Program
- Next Steps and Dillon House
- Perry House

Gender justice

- Modelling Respect and Equality Schools Pilot
- Restore
- Stop It Now! Australia
- The Men's Project
- Unpacking the Man Box

Just places

- Centre for Just Places
- Ecological Justice Hub
- Northern Territory programs
- Western Sydney programs

Some programs fall under multiple pillars and therefore have been listed twice, but participants are counted once only under their primary pillar for the purpose of annual statistics.

Our people

Our passionate and experienced staff and volunteers are at the heart of our work with people and communities.

In 2023–24, Jesuit Social Services filled more than 123 roles across Victoria, New South Wales and the Northern Territory, for a total of approximately 420 staff.

Jesuit Social Services is a values-based organisation. Our values are welcoming, discerning and courageous. We ensure all new staff members and volunteers have a strong understanding of our vision, mission and values, and how these relate to our work on a daily basis. Induction and orientation programs are a critical way of welcoming new staff and building strong foundations from which they can develop and grow. Over the financial year we delivered 12 induction and five orientation sessions.

420

staff in Victoria, New South Wales and the Northern Territory in more than 123 roles



Our volunteers

Jesuit Social Services' volunteers are a fundamental and highly valued part of what we do.

Over the past year, we maintained connections with over 189 volunteers, who contributed a combined total of 20,245 hours of support to Jesuit Social Services and our participants. These passionate and dedicated volunteers contributed to programs including our Flemington Homework Club, Ignite Op Shop and Food Store, Ecological Justice Hub, Ignite Cafe, and in supporting our policy and advocacy work.



"It fulfills me in a way that sometimes my professional job doesn't. I call it head and heart work. My career is head work and volunteer work is heart work."

Lucy Losinno

Jesuit Social Services Volunteer

189

volunteers provided **20,245 hours** of support to our participants and programs

Lucy's volunteer work making a difference

With two decades of volunteering experience under her belt, Lucy Losinno was looking for a new way to help in 2020 when she came across the Community Connection Mentoring program, and decided to give Jesuit Social Services a call.

"I was looking for something in mentoring and it stood out, it just seemed like there was a lot of care and passion in what they do, it's not just talk, they walk the walk," she said.

"I just felt like it was the right fit for me, and I felt very welcome straight away.

"I don't have my own kids, that's why I've done volunteer work for the last 20 years because I feel like I can look after more kids this way and make more of a difference."

The program is aimed at providing extended community support to young people involved in the Child Protection system, who reside in residential or home-based care and

are soon to be transitioning into independent living.

Lucy and her young person meet weekly, with the activities largely led by the participant.

"We do a lot of walking and talking so we can just debrief, we go through her emotions and how she's processing her emotions, and we do a lot of mindfulness as well," she said.

"But we have a lot of fun, you can almost guarantee that there's going to be both of us belly laughing on our catch-up."

If someone needs support and help, Lucy is the first to put her hand up – it's what she is good at, and what makes her feel good.

"It makes me feel like I'm contributing to the community as well not just for myself, I'm also helping other people and it brings me a lot of joy to do that."

The young person she mentors is about to reach the end of her 12 months in the program, and Lucy said the learnings and inspiration have been mutual.

Celebrating and thanking our amazing volunteers over morning tea for National Volunteer Week



Partners and supporters

Jesuit Social Services relies on the generosity of hundreds of individual donors and organisations, and we are deeply appreciative of your continued support. Your financial contributions and pro bono assistance are vital to our mission and make our work possible each year.

Thank you.

We also want to acknowledge the invaluable support we receive from various sectors, including government departments, businesses, trusts, foundations, and community groups. A special thanks to the Victorian Government's multiple departments for their significant contributions.

We are thankful to every organisation listed below for their partnership and trust in our work.

- 5point Foundation
- Australian Province of the Society of Jesus
- Bob Stewart Pty Ltd
- Commonwealth Government of Australia
- Dandenong City Council
- Eastern Melbourne PHN
- Gandel Foundation
- Gippsland PHN
- Glen Eira City Council
- Hantomeli Foundation
- Homes Victoria
- ICMEC Australia
- Jenkins Foundation
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
- Moonee Valley City Council
- Mount Pelion Foundation
- Neilson Foundation
- New South Wales State Government
- Nillumbik Shire Council
- Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation
- Norman, Mavis & Graeme Waters Perpetual Charitable Trust
- North Western Melbourne PHN
- Northern Territory Government
- Old Ignatians' Union
- Our Lady of the Way Parish, North Sydney
- Respect Victoria
- South Eastern Melbourne PHN
- St Aloysius College Foundation
- St Columba's Catholic College Springwood
- Stonnington City Council
- Superior Strategy Pty Ltd
- Sustainability Victoria
- The Lochtenberg Foundation
- The Newton Foundation
- Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)
- Victorian State Government
- Western Victoria PHN
- Westpac
- Yarra City Council

Build a just society with us

There are many ways to support and be involved with Jesuit Social Services' work.

Make a tax-deductible donation

Give hope to someone in need by making a donation at [jss.org.au/donate](https://www.jss.org.au/donate)

Volunteer

Contribute your time and skills to supporting people on the edges of society


Make a bequest


Build a legacy that helps us fulfil our vision of a just society

Advocate for justice

Join our campaigns and learn more about the issues we care about at [jss.org.au](https://www.jss.org.au)

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 03 9421 7600

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