

Catholic Social Services Australia to Host 2025 Parliamentary Advocacy Summit: Advancing the Common Good

15 Oct 2025

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) will convene its 2025 Parliamentary Advocacy Summit, titled *Advancing the Common Good*, on 28–29 October at the Australian Parliament House in Canberra. The event will bring together parliamentarians, member agencies, and community leaders to spotlight our vital work including addressing homelessness and mental ill-health – two of the most urgent challenges facing vulnerable Australians today.

CSSA CEO, Dr Jerry Nockles, said, “The Summit is a crucial moment to bring together voices from across the community and government to forge real solutions. Our members are on the frontlines, delivering hope and support to those who need it most. We must act decisively to ensure no one is left behind in the face of homelessness and mental ill-health.”

The landmark event offers a timely platform to amplify the key messages of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference’s 2025–2026 Social Justice Statement, titled *Signs of Hope on the Edge: Serving People Living in Homelessness and Mental Ill-Health*. The Summit’s focus aligns closely with the Statement’s call for urgent action, fostering parliamentary engagement on these critical social issues.

Dr Nockles said, “The Statement provides a clear and compassionate roadmap for action. Its sensible recommendations not only highlight the urgency of these issues but also offer practical pathways for government and community sectors to work together in advancing the common good.”

In 2022–23, homelessness services assisted 227,300 Australians, with approximately one-third experiencing mental health challenges. The *Signs of Hope on the Edge* Statement reminds us that “the longer people living in homelessness are left without support, the more difficult it becomes for them to rebuild their lives. The impact of homelessness is not just a crisis for the individuals affected – it’s a crisis for society as a whole.”

In addition, the Summit will present detailed findings and discussion from the *Real Costs, Real Impacts: A Path to Social Services Sustainability* research report, providing parliamentarians with vital insights into the economic realities and challenges faced by social service providers across Australia.

Dr Nockles said, “This research shines a light on the real economic pressures faced by social service providers, underscoring the urgent need for sustainable funding models. It equips policymakers with the evidence necessary to make informed decisions that will strengthen the sector and ensure vital services reach those who need them most.”

MEDIA RELEASE



The Summit will be officially opened by the Chair of the Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service, Bishop Tim Harris, who will present the Social Justice Statement to the Australian Parliament through the House of Representatives Speaker, Milton Dick.

Minister Ged Kearney, Assistant Minister for Social Services and Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, will deliver the formal opening address. Other prominent parliamentarians and advocates for social change who will join the summit include Minister Andrew Leigh, Senator Andrew Bragg, Senator David Pocock, Senator David Sharma, Barnaby Joyce, Senator Deborah O'Neill, Senator Matt Canavan, Senator Anne Ruston, Sally Sitou, and Kate Chaney. Respected political commentator Paul Bongiorno will facilitate discussion.

The Summit will also feature the *Journeys of Belonging* art exhibition, proudly sponsored by the University of Notre Dame Australia, highlighting stories of connection and hope among vulnerable communities.

Dr Nockles said, "This beautiful and powerful exhibition captures the lived experiences of vulnerable Australians, inspiring all who see it to deepen their commitment to social justice. It is a moving reminder of the resilience, value, and dignity of those we serve. We are very pleased to bring this powerful exhibition to the very halls of power."

In this Jubilee Year, CSSA is proud to highlight the work of its members – "builders of hope" on the frontlines of homelessness, mental health, and a wide range of social services across Australia. CSSA remains committed to advocating for compassionate socio-economic policies that uplift the most vulnerable, fostering enduring social change.

Registrations are open at: <https://cssa.org.au/cssas-2025-advocacy-summit/>

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Media Contact | Carmel Sefian | 02 6285 1366 | carmel.sefian@cssa.org.au

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) advocates for the Church's social service ministry. It is the national peak body for Catholic social service providers. The CSSA's network operates across all Australian States and Territories and has a combined total of over 700 sites.

The national network of Catholic social services

ABN 49 061 834 197

PO Box 6067, O'Connor ACT 2602. Level 1, 3 Sargood Street, O'Connor ACT 2602. **T** 02 6285 1366 **E** admin@cssa.org.au **www.cssa.org.au**

