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PARRAMATTA

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Catholic Care welcomes new government partnership to keep families together across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains**

Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains (WSBM) has welcomed the opportunity to continue its mission of supporting vulnerable children and families across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, with the expansion and extension of its partnership with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

Catholic Care WSBM has been selected to deliver its comprehensive *Families Together* program - an important initiative focused on keeping children safe at home by strengthening family relationships and building long-term stability within local communities.

According to DCJ, the “primary objective of Family Preservation is to keep children safe at home with their families, and prevent removal, placement in out-of-home care (OOHC), and future contact with the child protection system. Family Preservation also aims to support children and families to achieve wider social benefits, including better educational attainment and improved health and wellbeing indicators.”

Catholic Care WSBM's *Families Together* program plays a critical role in walking alongside families experiencing complex challenges across the rapidly growing and multicultural communities of Western Sydney. The program provides early intervention, practical support, and compassionate care aimed at creating safe and nurturing environments where children and their families feel supported, can address concerns and reduce the number of children entering care.

“Our *Families Together* program reflects a shared commitment between Catholic Care WSBM and DCJ to place children’s wellbeing at the centre, while recognising the dignity and potential of every family,” said Helen Emmerson, Managing Director of Catholic Care WSBM.

“Keeping families together safely has been our focus for the last few years, and I am pleased to expand our services to the many people who require our help. Last year alone, we supported over 510 clients across our whole Family Services – most from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and First Nations families.

“There is a real need in the community, which is why *Families Together* will provide tailored, strengths-based support, helping families address immediate concerns while also building the skills and confidence needed for long-term stability,” she said.

Fr Fernando Montano, the Episcopal Vicar for Social Services, highlighted the strong alignment of the program with the Church’s mission in local communities.

“In Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, we see both incredible strength and real need within families. This program reflects the Church’s ongoing commitment to accompanying people in those moments of difficulty, and to ensuring that families are supported to grow in safety, dignity, and hope.”

The partnership with the DCJ is for another five years allowing for growth and stability of the *Families Together* program to ensure that children are supported to remain safe, connected, and nurtured within their homes.

**Media enquiries:** Anita Sulentic, Head of Communications and Engagement at the Diocese of Parramatta. **M:** 0499 948 533 **E:** [anita.sulentic@parracatholic.org](mailto:anita.sulentic@parracatholic.org)

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### **About Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains**

Catholic Care is the social welfare agency of the Diocese of Parramatta. Catholic Care was established in Sydney 85 years ago as the Catholic Bureau, and for nearly 40 years, it has existed to do Christ's work in the community through the support of its dedicated staff, partners and volunteers. Through the Church, Catholic Care aims to make a positive difference in the lives of people who need support, helping them to find joy and purpose in life. Catholic Care supports the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community. Regardless of background, gender, age or faith, anyone who needs it can turn to Catholic Care for support and professional care.

### **About the Diocese of Parramatta**

The Diocese of Parramatta is the Catholic Church in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains and is home to over 320,000 Catholics with 47 parishes and churches. The Diocese educates more than 43,000 students across its 80 schools, employs more than 5,500 people and cares for thousands of people in need through its social services arm, Catholic Care.

Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv was appointed the fourth Bishop of Parramatta in 2016. He is Australia's first Asian-born Bishop, and the first Vietnamese-born Bishop to lead a Catholic Diocese outside of Vietnam. You can read more about [him here](#).