

St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia

NATIONAL COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2023



St Vincent de Paul Society
NATIONAL COUNCIL of AUSTRALIA Inc. *good works*

Our Mission

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organisation that aspires to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy, and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society.

Our Vision

The Society aspires to be recognised as a caring Catholic charity offering 'a hand up' to people in need. We do this by respecting their dignity, sharing our hope, and encouraging those we assist to take control of their own destiny.

Our Key Values

Commitment - Loyalty in service to our mission, vision and values

Compassion - Welcoming and serving all with understanding and without judgement

Respect - Service to all regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender or political opinions

Integrity - Promoting, maintaining and adhering to our mission, vision and values

Empathy - Establishing relationships based on respect, trust, friendship and perception

Advocacy - Working to transform the causes of poverty and challenging the causes of human injustice

Courage - Encouraging spiritual growth, welcoming innovation and giving hope for the future

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge with deep respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the Traditional Custodians of this land. May Elders, past and present, be blessed and honoured. May we join together and build a future based on compassion, justice and hope.

MESSAGE FROM NATIONAL PRESIDENT

The St Vincent de Paul Society is committed to serving people in need in our community.

The Society's strength lies in our local presence in communities, which enables us to offer personal service, neighbour to neighbour, with compassion and respect. While acting locally, we are bound together, connected to our Vincentian brothers and sisters around Australia and the world, by our shared history and mission.

As the National Council, we must serve our members in Australia by ensuring the Society remains true to its values, with members and councils working collaboratively within Australia and beyond to carry out our mission – through good works, through sharing our faith, and through advocating on behalf of our members and the people we assist.

This Strategic Plan will help to anchor us in the years ahead, serving as a guide and constant reminder of our purpose and mission as National Council. In addition this Strategic Plan shows how the National Council will lead and govern the Society in Australia for the next eight to 10 years through and with the State and Territory Councils enabling our members and volunteers to concentrate on their vital work of serving Christ through our companions knowing that they have the necessary resources and compliance structures they need and acting in accordance with The Rule.

It will strengthen our role as we work with members and councils in Australia, Oceania and throughout the world to build conferences of well-informed and spiritually enriched members, to do good works in a safe and sustainable manner, and to influence law and policy through our example and our tenacious advocacy.



NATIONAL COUNCIL PURPOSE

To represent and guide the Society nationally, enabling the State and Territory Councils in achieving our mission.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles are informed by The Rule and help us assess where and how National Council might operate.

The Rule (Article 16) sets out the National Council's role. As such National Council's role is:

- prioritising advocacy and speaking out for the sake of people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are over represented among our companions;
- supporting initiatives when there is a national benefit identified and it makes sense to do something together rather than separately;
- promoting subsidiarity so that activity is carried out at the level that is most helpful, logical and responsive;
- upholding, updating and promoting The Rule, so that it continues to serve our contemporary society;
- providing representation nationally and internationally;
- effectively creating links and environments to collaborate, coordinate and reallocate resources across Australia; and
- mediating only where there are intractable disputes between or within state and territory councils.



OUR ASPIRATION

An Australia transformed by compassion and built on justice.



LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES 2028

Supporting our people

We will create the environment of increased Vincentian spirituality, diversity and numbers in the Society.

Promoting and protecting our identity

We will be recognised as a safe, high performing and caring organisation by companions, the community, governments, and agencies.

One Society

We will foster productive collaboration across the Society, creating positive outcomes for our people.

National Advocacy

We will influence our nation's priorities, by being a voice for people who are experiencing disadvantage.

Sustainability

We will build the Society's capacity to effectively operate across the jurisdictions, sharing resources to most effectively meet our mission and our vision.

International relations

We will empower national councils in developing countries to sustainably build their Vincentian vision and we will support Council General International to grow the Society's impact worldwide.



Our Success Measures

An increased well-being, independence and resilience among our companions measured against a 2020 baseline survey.



STRATEGIC GOALS

1. OUR SPIRITUALITY AND MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Support people in their Vincentian spiritual journey through a positive and supportive environment where people are welcomed, valued and committed to contribute to the mission.**

Measure: Achieve a net increase of 5 per cent in the number of members and volunteers by December 2022.

Objectives: We will achieve this by:

- 1.1.1 Building on existing models and practices to establish a national approach to induction, support and training to promote a common understanding of the mission of the Society and facilitate development.**

- 1.1.1.1 Consult with State and Territory Councils to identify and agree on which elements of Society membership are best encouraged by National Council and which by State and Territory Councils. (see 4.1.1) (December 2020)
- 1.1.1.2 Identify the current number of members, associate members and volunteers in each jurisdiction. (December 2020)
- 1.1.1.3 Establish a joint working group involving the National Council and State and Territory Councils to develop a strategy based on the existing best practice and research. (December 2020)
- 1.1.1.4 Implement agreed strategy. (February 2021)

- 1.1.2 Supporting State and Territory Councils to explore flexible membership models and opportunities.**

- 1.1.2.1 The Advisory Committee for Membership to explore best practice models. (April 2021)
- 1.1.2.2 Advisory Committee to recommend to National Council a best practice model, ensuring flexibility for local conditions. (July 2021)
- 1.1.2.3 National Council suggests to States and Territories that they appoint someone to act as the lead agency in facilitating best practice models. (December 2021)
- 1.1.2.4 National Council to consider if The Rule needs to be revised in this area. (July 2022)

- 1.1.3 Encouraging leadership development pathways nationally and in the States and Territories.**

- 1.1.3.1 National Council secretariat to work with States and Territories to prepare a briefing paper on the issues and opportunities for National Council to consider and decide next steps. (December 2020)
- 1.1.3.2 Create a leadership development program to enhance succession and competency within National Council. (July 2021)
- 1.1.3.3 Assess the effectiveness of the current leadership development programs. (July 2021)
- 1.1.3.4 In cooperation with State and Territory Councils build on current best practice and embed across the Society as appropriate. (July 2022)
- 1.1.3.5 Build on current best practice across the Society to promote Participation of younger members in committees. (July 2021)

- 1.1.4 Encouraging spiritual formation and collegiate relationships between all the Councils.**

- 1.1.4.1 The Advisory Committee for Membership and Mission and Vincentian Spirituality Committee, working with the Joint Working Party, to explore the best practice membership models. (Refer to 1.1.1.3) (July 2021)
- 1.1.4.2 The Joint Working Party recommends to the Advisory Committee for Membership a best practice model. (July 2021)
- 1.1.4.3 Based on advice from State and Territory Councils, National Council to consider revisions to the Rule to encourage and support the engagement of all members. (February 2022)

- 1.1.5 Embedding spiritual advisors at all levels of the Society.**

- 1.1.5.1 National Council to invite the States and Territories to explore best practice around spiritual advisor roles. (September 2020)
- 1.1.5.2 Investigate States and Territories appointing a lead agency in facilitating spiritual advisors at all levels. (See 4.1.1). (September 2020)
- 1.1.5.3 National Council to decide if The Rule needs to be revised in this area. (June 2021)

2. OUR ADVOCACY

2.1 Influence Australian national priorities by connecting the voice of those experiencing disadvantage with those who can make a difference.

Measures:

- Our people (members, volunteers and employees) are represented on five to 10 government and/or industry advisory bodies by 2022.
- We have influenced the design of between five and 10 government and national organisation policies that benefit our companions by 2022.
- Our people have collated and delivered between five and 10 research papers on the Society's work and its impact in the community by 2022.

Objectives: We will work to achieve our objectives by:

2.1.1 Nurturing the Society's advocacy frameworks to inform and strengthen our advocacy work.

- 2.1.1.1 Continue to empower the Social Justice Advisory Committee to set the advocacy agenda and implement their work plan. (Ongoing)
- 2.1.1.2 We will have social justice representation on the National Council to lift the profile within National Council of social justice issues most relevant to our companions.
- 2.1.1.3 National Council will report on social justice and advocacy as a standing agenda item.

2.1.2 Developing our relationship as a trusted partner of the Federal Government and national institutions.

- 2.1.2.1 The National President and National Council CEO will continue to network with key federal stakeholders. (Ongoing)
- 2.1.2.2 National President and National Council CEO to create and deliver public statements in support of our national advocacy positions. (Ongoing)

2.1.3 Developing and deepening our research capabilities by working with State and Territory Councils, partners in the welfare sector and academic/research organisations to understand the needs of our companions and the impact of our work using a national research prospectus.

- 2.1.3.1 Develop metadata and data-sharing protocols. (February 2021)
- 2.1.3.2 Collect and collate data from conferences to inform our advocacy work. (July 2021)
- 2.1.3.3 Working with State and Territory Councils to identify evidence-based frameworks to underpin our advocacy work. (September 2021)
- 2.1.3.4 Agree on a national research prospectus. (February 2022)
- 2.1.3.5 Develop an advocacy position registry for all national, state and territory advocacy work. (February 2022)
- 2.1.3.6 Identify the best jurisdiction(s) to champion this area on behalf of National Council. (February 2022)

3. OUR GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

3.1 National: Provide the structures and support to serve our community and ensure our reputation is maintained.

Measures against 2020 baseline:

- A healthier, more effective organisation as measured through member, volunteer and employee surveys and external reputation surveys in each State and Territory.
- Significant progress has been made towards our long-term objectives measured through a strategy implementation dashboard.

Objectives: We will achieve this by:

3.1.1 Developing a positive and collaborative culture within the membership of National Council.

- 3.1.1.1 Embed the National Council charter and code of conduct via member induction and regular communications. (July 2020)
- 3.1.1.2 Run a retreat once a year to build relationships and Vincentian spirituality. (Annually)
- 3.1.1.3 Conduct one combined meeting of presidents and CEOs a year. (Annually)
- 3.1.1.4 Commission an annual performance and culture evaluation on National Council. (February 2021, then annually)
- 3.1.1.5 Explore running a councils' congress in the next three years. (September 2022)

3.1.2 Reviewing current national structures to ensure the effective governance and the management of the Society (including The Rule).

- 3.1.2.1 Legal and Governance Standing Committee to identify the impact of current governance structures and their attendant risks, outline options for National Council's consideration. (September 2021)
- 3.1.2.2 Create an action plan, in consultation and collaboration with States and Territories, if approved. (December 2021)
- 3.1.2.3 Sign off and implement the action plan. (December 2022)

3.1.3 Considering what a federal model of governance might look like if adopted in the future.

- 3.1.3.1 Legal and Governance Standing Committee to provide a paper for National Council's consideration. (December 2021)
- 3.1.3.2 If National Council wants to pursue a federal model of governance, develop an engagement strategy. (June 2022)

3.1.4 Fostering nationally consistent, high-level, service standards for our companions.

- 3.1.4.1 Identify current practices across the Society. (December 2020)

- 3.1.4.2 Working with the Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable People Standing Committee to harmonise the State and Territory Councils' protocols. (December 2020)

- 3.1.4.3 Articulate consistent minimum service standards within the understood risks which includes flexibility to local conditions. (March 2021)

- 3.1.4.4 Invite State and Territory Councils to create an action plan to embed service standards in their areas. (April 2021)

3.2 International: Support the Council General International to grow the Society's effectiveness worldwide.

Measures:

- Council General International has adopted the majority of Australia's proposals in its operations.
- 10 per cent increase against 2020 baseline of well targeted activities from Australia into international communities.

Objectives: We will achieve this by:

3.2.1 Improving awareness of Council General International and its activities within the Australian Vincentian community.

- 3.2.1.1 International Standing Committee to develop a communication and engagement strategy. (June 2021)
- 3.2.1.2 Committee to oversee the implementation of the strategy and assess impact. (June 2021-ongoing)

3.2.2 Providing leadership to Council General International and its members on matters of good governance, including transparency of decision-making.

- 3.2.2.1 Representatives attend and actively lead in Council General International fora. (Ongoing)

3.2.3 Empowering national councils in developing countries, to sustainably build their Vincentian vision and good governance.

- 3.2.3.1 Supporting national councils in Oceania with a simplified version of The Rule in their own language. (June 2022)
- 3.2.3.2 Representatives attend and actively lead in appropriate meetings. (Ongoing)

3.2.4 Promoting opportunities for direct assistance, including Twinning and Assist-a-Student (AAS).

- 3.2.4.1 Implement the recommendations of the AAS review. (July 2021)
- 3.2.4.2 Explore opportunities for direct projects. (February 2022)

4. OUR WORK TOGETHER

4.1 Further develop and utilise the capabilities within the National, State and Territory Councils to improve efficiency and effectiveness for the Society.

Measures:

- Every Council (National, State and Territory) is involved in at least one new cross-jurisdictional initiative.

Objectives: We will achieve this by:

4.1.1 Further developing avenues for each Council to offer its resources or expertise to other Councils in order to provide value and benefits for people and companions.

- 4.1.1.1 Assessing the strengths of each State and Territory. (September 2020)
- 4.1.1.2 Engaging the CEO group to advise and participate with National Council regarding future initiatives. (Sept 2020)
- 4.1.1.3 Continuing to empower State and Territory CEOs to explore opportunities and agree on 'working together' priorities. (Ongoing)
- 4.1.1.4 Agreeing on the initiatives that will leverage the current work of national, state or territory councils to benefit our companions. (July 2021)
- 4.1.1.5 Developing opportunities to share skills and knowledge within the Vincentian network, with a focus on, smaller State and Territory Councils to deliver identified national initiatives. (July 2021)
- 4.1.1.6 The responsible Council creates an implementation plan in consultation with the relevant Council(s). (September 2021)

4.1.2 Developing and promoting communication practices to enhance engagement within all areas of the Society.

- 4.1.2.1 Affirm and strengthen the current practices that are working within all jurisdictions. (December 2020)
- 4.1.2.2 Identify the gaps in communication at the national level. (February 2021)

- 4.1.2.3 Enhance communication practices that have ease of use and integrate with State and Territory systems. (April 2021)

4.2 Fostering initiatives that enhance positive outcomes for our companions.

Measures: Three new initiatives are being implemented by the end of 2022.

Objectives: We will achieve this by:

4.2.1 Supporting national collaboration to ensure greater sustainability, compliance, risk management and effectiveness of services offered.

- 4.2.1.1 Facilitating discussions amongst State, Territory and National Councils to support national initiatives focus areas over the next three years. (April 2021)
- 4.2.1.2 Developing a national initiative framework and agreement on how national initiatives will be coordinated, funded, communicated and operationalised ensuring flexibility to local conditions. (December 2021)

4.2.2 Coordinating the implementation of the initiative framework for the agreed national initiatives.

- 4.2.2.1 Support the projects in line with the agreed framework. (December 2022)

4.2.3 Ensuring that responses to nationally important situations, such as, disasters, royal commissions and Indigenous reconciliation are appropriately managed.

- 4.2.3.1 Develop clear cross-jurisdictional agreements and templates to create consistency and effective responses.

5. OUR SUSTAINABILITY

5.1 Ensure the National Council Secretariat is adequately resourced to support National Council and provide the services required to carry out the strategic goals.

Measures: Key deliverables and responsibilities are accomplished (ongoing).

Objectives: We will achieve this by:

5.1.1 Ensuring that the role of the Secretariat is clear in function, authority, responsibilities and accountabilities.

5.1.1.1 National Council will continue to give guidance and feedback to the Secretariat regarding its role. (September 2020)

5.1.1.2 National Council to conduct performance evaluations annually on the Secretariat. (December 2020)

5.2 Ensure financial sustainability of the Society in Australia.

Measure: All jurisdictions are financially viable within the parameters set by National Council.

Objectives: We will achieve this by:

5.2.1 Working with the State and Territory chief financial officers, National Council to create a financial sustainability model within contemporary governance structures for the Society.

5.2.1.1 Model the financial viability of each jurisdiction over the next 10 years. (July 2021)

5.2.1.2 Develop and implement a financial sustainability model that considers governance, services to companions, long-term sustainability, and economies of scale. (December 2021)



WWW.VINNIES.ORG.AU



St Vincent de Paul Society

NATIONAL COUNCIL of AUSTRALIA Inc.

good works