



St Vincent de Paul Society
CANBERRA/GOULBURN *good works*

SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY STRATEGY

2023-2025

PUBLIC VERSION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the Traditional Custodians of this land, with deep respect.

May Elders, past, present and emerging, be blessed and honoured.

May we join together and build a future based on compassion, justice, hope, faith, and reconciliation.

ABOUT ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY CANBERRA/GOULBURN

The St Vincent de Paul Society (the Society) is an international lay Catholic organisation tackling poverty and disadvantage, assisting people in need, and combating social injustice. The Society was founded in 1833 in Paris, France by a group of young people who wanted to actively engage in addressing social disadvantage.

The Society now operates in more than 150 countries and has over 800,000 volunteer members. There are more than 60,000 volunteers in Australia, of whom around 2,000 work in the ACT and the surrounding region.

Through our volunteers and staff, the Society has been serving the local community since 1924. The Society aims to bring about lasting change to the lives of people in need. We provide practical frontline support, advocacy, and friendship to the most vulnerable members of our community. Our objective is to assist any person in need regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender, or political opinion. We achieve this through offering ‘a hand up not a hand-out.’

The Society is a registered charitable not for profit organisation. It is incorporated in each state and territory. The Australian National Council includes the President of each state and territory, and the President of the National Council represents Australia on the International General Council.

The Society prides itself on employing talented and enthusiastic individuals. Our employees undertake a variety of management, administrative, case management and community service roles to deliver our programs and services.

The income of the Society in the ACT is derived principally from donations, income from our 27 retail shops and specific program funding from the ACT Government and the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Members - Our members are the backbone of the Society, providing support to companions, determining our strategic direction, and guiding the effective delivery of programs and services to those in need.

Volunteers - Our volunteers give freely of their skills and abilities across the breadth of the Society.

Employees - Our paid employees are kept to a minimum to allow resources to be directed to people in need. We acknowledge the expertise of our employees in supporting the good works of our members and volunteers.

WHERE WE WORK



We operate across the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and surrounding southern and western regional areas of New South Wales (NSW) with a network of members and volunteers.

The VINNIES' APPROACH TO ADVOCACY

Our advocacy drive focuses on policy and systemic issues that perpetuates homelessness, indigenous injustice, high cost of living, injustices towards refugees and people seeking asylum. The Society therefore will advocate for reformative actions from ACT and NSW Governments through transformative policies that places at its Centre, the voice and experiences of citizens who have lived through vulnerability.

Expertise & Experience: We seek to address the issues that make people vulnerable. We understand the root causes of poverty and vulnerability. As is the core message of the gospel, standing in love with those going through difficult moments in life is a responsibility bestowed on us all.

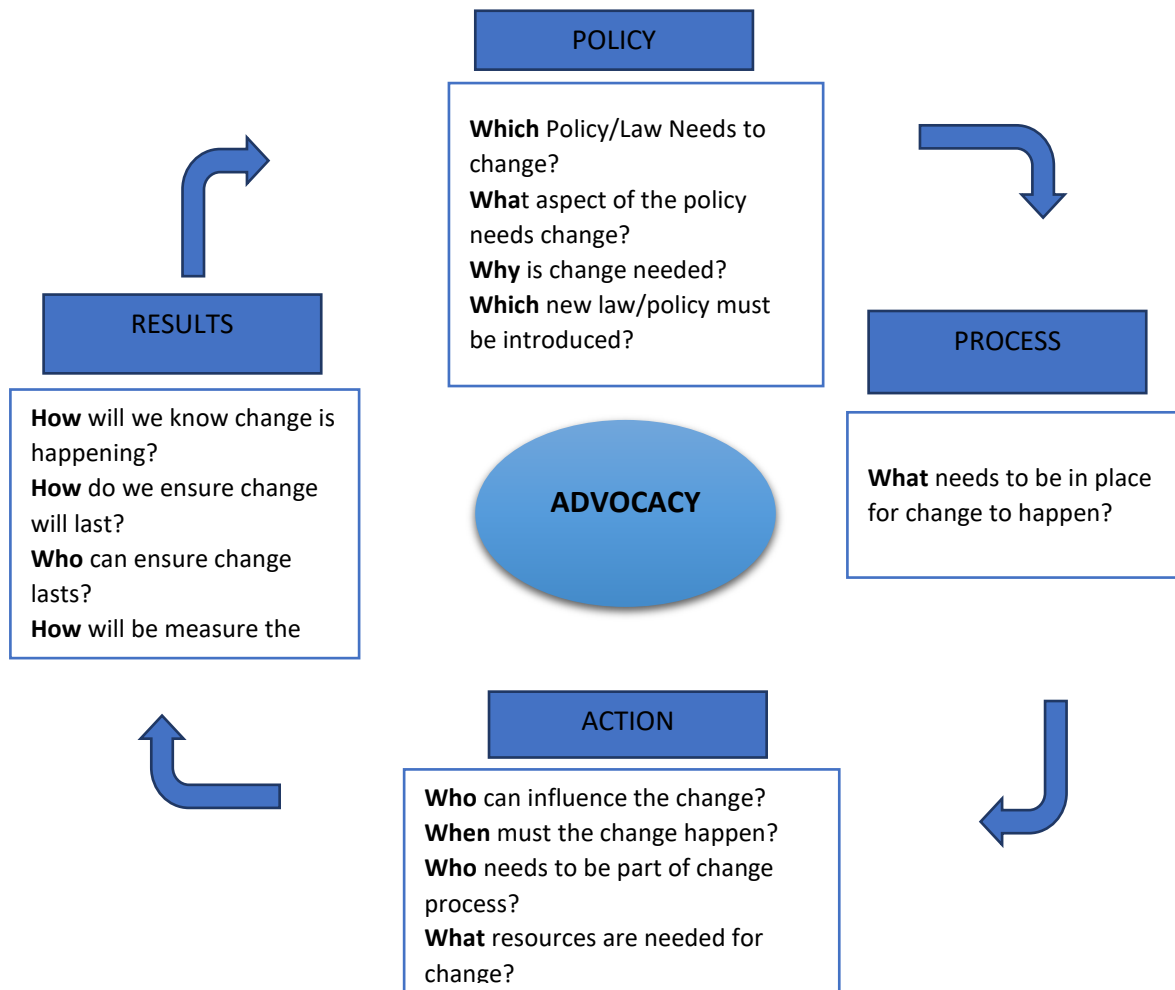
Partnership: We believe there are enough resources within our communities, both financial and human, to address the social and systemic lapses that have resulted in injustices among us.

We seek to be part of initiatives that proactively strengthen the civic sector. We engage the media, facilitate consultations and campaigns, and seek to be part of coalitions and movements that drive policy reforms.

Active Citizenry: We believe in the ability of the citizens to articulate their challenges and needs. We seek to harness and amplify citizenry voices, making it the backbone of our advocacy work.

We adopt strategies that effectively empower the voices of citizens and concurrently embolden policy actors and power brokers to act promptly.

Figure 1.1: The Policy Advocacy Cycle



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.

The Society is dedicated to tackling poverty and disadvantage by helping anyone in need. People are at the core of our work and a combination of members, volunteers and employees help us to assist the most disadvantaged in our society. Conferences in almost every town and suburb across our region provide emergency relief through personalized support from our members.

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The Social Justice and Advocacy Committee (Committee) is a committee of the Territory Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra Goulburn (the Society). The primary responsibilities of the Committee are to provide the Territory Council and the President with advice and guidance on issues affecting social justice and advocacy. The Committee's work is supported by the Chief Executive Officer and his or her nominees, principally the Chief Financial Officer.

The Committee's work include:

- a) development of the Social Justice agenda for the region.
- b) provide advice on social justice and advocacy issues within the region.
- c) be an effective advocate at all levels for the promotion of social justice in the region in accordance with social justice and advocacy priorities as agreed by the Territory Council from time to time.
- d) provide the Society's members, volunteers and employees with the information that assists in the recognition, understanding, and appreciation of social justice issues in the day-to-day work which they undertake.
- e) increase the understanding by members, volunteers and employees of broad social policy issues and the impact they have on the lives of the people in our communities.
- f) encourage members, volunteers, and employees to actively critique social justice issues experienced in their work for the Society and their daily activities and to express the consequences of these to the broader community.

OUR ADVOCACY GOALS

The Society seeks to be a proactive voice contributing to the policy discussions and initiatives towards addressing social injustices facing indigenous communities, refugees and people seeking asylum, families and individuals facing or at risk of homelessness and suffering under the high cost of living in the Canberra Goulburn area.

The Society will through its interventions seek to bring the local context of issues to the fore in the celebration of international days and events. This will give impetus to initiate some policy reform discussion within the four outlined thematic areas, deepening and strengthening on-going advocacy initiatives that are contributing to a progressive and transformative systems in ACT. We will do this cognizant of the partnerships that must be built within the social justice ecosystem.

The four (4) outlined Outcome statements are:

- Outcome 1: Improved policy framework that support the delivery of decent, safe, and efficient low-cost Housing for all Canberra/Goulburn
- Outcome 2: Interventions of stakeholders have contributed to a progressive and transformative justice delivery system.
- Outcome 3: Improved policy framework that mitigates impact of high cost of living.
- Outcome 4: Interventions of Vinnies CG has increased the localisation of national and international issues in Canberra/Goulburn.

OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED POLICY FRAMEWORK THAT SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF DECENT, SAFE, AND EFFICIENT LOW-COST HOUSING FOR ALL CANBERRA/GOULBURN

SECTOR: HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

OUTPUTS	ACTIVITY
Output 1.1: Non-for-Profits' (NFPs) initiatives and evidence have influenced Housing and Homelessness policy actions and directives in Canberra/Goulburn	1.1.1 Convene Quarterly lesson sharing and partnership building meetings with Policy Makers on Housing & Homelessness in CG
	1.1.2 Convene a "Legislative Assembly Coalition Against Homelessness"
	1.1.3 Organise Annual Stakeholders Housing Forum - Policy Makers, NFPs, Private Sector, Media, Academia
	1.1.4 Publish Social Justice and Election Statements
	1.1.5 Convene a Social Justice Community of Practice Learning Session within the Society
	1.1.6 Publish an Advocacy Statement in relation to CEO Sleep Out
OUTPUTS	ACTIVITY
Output 1.2: Voices of citizens are rallied and amplified in policy advocacy engagements on Homelessness	2.2.1 Conduct Policy literacy Media Campaign to sensitize citizens on Housing and Homelessness related policies
	2.2.2 Organise Citizens Awareness Campaign on social media
	2.2.3 Conduct Research to document the lived experiences of people facing Homelessness
	2.2.4 Convene an Annual Youth Forum on Social Justice
	2.2.5 Facilitate a Community Forum - Citizens and Elected Representatives on Homelessness

OUTCOME 2: INTERVENTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A PROGRESSIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE SECTOR.

SECTOR: FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

OUTPUTS	ACTIVITY
Output 2.1 Increased awareness on transformative justice methods of delivery and models	2.1.1 Mobilise support for on-going campaigns on constitutional reforms on Criminal Responsibility Age
	2.1.2 Convene meetings to engage policy makers on social economic issues facing First Nations Peoples in CG
	2.1.3 Develop partnerships with peak indigenous bodies to support a Royal Commission into Indigenous Justice in the ACT
	2.1.4 Develop and communicate Vinnies CG stance on the "Uluru Statement of the Heart" campaign
OUTPUTS	ACTIVITY
Output 2.2: Increased awareness of Reconciliatory actions among Members, Employees and Volunteers (MEVs)	2.2.1 Prepare the Reconciliation Action Plan II
	2.2.2 Conduct culturally sensitive trainings for Members, Employees and Volunteers (MEVs)
	2.2.3 Organise locally for the Voice referendum in line with the Vinnies national campaign

SECTOR: REFUGESS AND PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

OUTPUTS	ACTIVITY
Output 2.3: Collective action to demand improvements for refugees and people seeking asylum in our community.	2.3.1 Seek extension for ACT Government asylum seeker housing program
	2.3.2 Participate in Vinnies National Members Advocacy Priorities
	2.3.3 Support coalition leading the Migrant Rights campaign
	2.3.4 Contribute to the campaign for policy reforms on the processing of migrants and people seeking asylum
	2.3.5 Contribute to the Canberra Refugee Action Campaigns

OUTCOME 3: IMPROVED POLICY FRAMEWORK THAT MITIGATES IMPACT OF HIGH COST OF LIVING.

SECTOR: COST OF LIVING; CLIMATE JUSTICE

OUTPUTS	ACTIVITY
3.1 NFPs initiatives and evidence have influenced cost of living policy actions and directives.	3.1.1 Conduct research to document the impact of high cost living within the Conferences.
	3.1.2 Research and publish national and international best practice on cost-of-living policy measures.
	3.1.3 Engage government with research evidence for policy and legislative action.
	3.1.4 Mobilize local support for “Raise the Rate” Campaign
3.2 Climate smart measures are helping reduce cost of living for all	3.2.1 Track and monitor ACT and NSW Governments implementation of Climate Change related policies and strategies
	3.2.2 Monitor and engage with the ACT Gas Transitioning programme
	3.2.3 Research and Publish Policy papers on climate smart initiatives for low-income households
	3.3.4 Engage policy makers with evidence from Vinnies’ climate smart policy tracking initiatives.

OUTCOME 4: INTERVENTIONS OF VINNIES CG HAS INCREASED THE LOCALISATION OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES IN CANBERRA/GOULBURN.

SECTOR: HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS; FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE; REFUGESS AND PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

OUTPUTS	ACTIVITY
Output 4.1: Citizens are informed to hold duty bearers accountable on highlighted social justice issues	4.1 .1 Commemorate International Days in line with the advocacy ideals of Vinnies CG
	4.1.2 Develop a Social Justice Communication Plan
Output 4.2: Improved Visibility for Vinnies for its social justice ideals	4.2.1 Contribute to the VINNIES Month Celebration
	4.2.2 Institute the publication of a Social Justice Statements from the CEOs Office.
	4.2.3 Develop Social Justice Content for the Conference Newsletter.
	4.2.4 Coordinate the Social Justice Committee.
	4.2.5 Conduct an assessment on the establishment of a Social Justice Conference.
	4.2.6 Conduct advocacy training sessions for Employees, Members, and Volunteers.

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

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ENQUIRIES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY

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