



8 March 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

International Women's Day: Women in Leadership: Achieving and Equal Future in a COVID-19 World

The National Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia stands with the international community as we celebrate the achievements of women everywhere on International Women's Day.

National President, Claire Victory said this year especially, in the face of the challenges encountered during COVID-19 and the disturbing revelations about the treatment of women in our national parliamentary workplace, we must uphold the dignity of every woman.

'We acknowledge their achievements and their struggles, and we continue to advocate for social and broader public policy which enhances the lives of all women, especially those experiencing inequality, discrimination or disadvantage on many fronts, by virtue of their race, religion, sexual or gender identity or socio-economic status,' Ms Victory said.

'We join with the International Women's Development Agency to celebrate the women who came before us, those who stand beside us now and those who will come after.

'The Society's good works are founded on the lives of those who compassionately served others.

'Our *good works* are built on a history of extraordinary people including many, many women, committed to the intrinsic dignity of every human being.

'Women in particular, know that investing in people who are experiencing disadvantage and supporting them to access safe, secure and affordable housing, health services and education enables fuller participation in community and economic life.

'Sr Rosalie Rendu was one of those women. She has been an inspiration for generations. She was a significant voice of influence for young university students in the 1830s and in her life-time she provided a wonderful and powerful example of humility, compassion, diligence and wise counsel. These values led her to do incredible work with people suffering in the depths of poverty.

'During her time in the District where she worked for over 50 years Rosalie was a nurse, a justice of the peace, a catechist for the street children, and even a peacemaker between revolutionaries. She opened a free clinic, a pharmacy, a school, an orphanage, a childcare centre, a home for the elderly and a youth club for young workers. She was a counsellor and advisor to many.

'And today we continue that tradition. A significant proportion of our members, volunteers and staff are women.

'I honour them and their contributions nationally and in their local communities.

'Women participate at all levels in our local conferences, on our state and national boards, in our programs and managing and contributing to our vast network of shops which raise essential funds and provide a doorway to our many services.

'On this day, we celebrate the lives of all women,' Ms Victory said.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.

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