

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES AUSTRALIA NETWORK UNITES FOR IMPACT

30 November 2023

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) member agency heads convened from across the nation for a two-day advocacy event at Parliament House, strengthening connections with Ministers, policymakers, and senior advisers. This gathering, held on the 28th and 29th of November 2023, was a pivotal moment for the CSSA network to engage with the Australian Federal Government on critical social justice issues.

Monique Earsman, Executive Director at CSSA, highlighted the pressing concerns within their member network: 'With rising costs of living, increasing homelessness, and food insecurity affecting more Australians, the challenges faced by ordinary people are intensifying. Our services are experiencing an unprecedented demand for help. Our assembly focused on highlighting these critical issues, communicating service delivery challenges, and collaborating with the Government to create actionable solutions to support vulnerable Australians.'

The agency heads' meeting provided a unique platform for direct engagement with influential Federal Government representatives, including Ministers, Members of Parliament, and policymakers. Peter Monaghan, Chair of CSSA and CEO of Marist180, emphasised, 'These facilitated meetings are critical for advancing our mission and putting a spotlight on critical issues impacting our sector. This event facilitates substantive discussions on policy matters and amplifies the Catholic voice for social justice and positive change.'

The Hon Minister Brendan O'Connor, who delivered a compelling address at the event, expressed gratitude for the crucial work undertaken by CSSA and its network. He acknowledged the transformative power of the services provided by CSSA member agencies, noting their dual impact on changing lives and contributing to national productivity and workforce participation.

Minister O'Connor emphasised the significant workforce challenges faced by Australia, particularly in the care and social services sector, due to a shortage of skilled workers. He referred to the Employment White Paper released in September, which identified improvements in service delivery, especially in the care and support sector, as a key opportunity for future productivity growth.

'Many of you here tonight are already aware of, or involved in, the considerable work underway by the Government to make vital systemic changes for a robust social services sector,' Minister O'Connor stated.

The Catholic Social Services Australia network remains committed to ongoing collaboration and advocacy, leveraging these interactions to drive positive change and address the challenges faced by impoverished Australians.

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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 900 sites.