

Urgent need to address Australia's housing crisis

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Bishop Vincent launches Catholic Bishops of Australia's 2018-2019 Social Justice Statement

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference has today released its [2018-2019 Social Justice Statement](#) at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta. *A Place to Call Home: Making a Home for Everyone in Our Land*, was launched by Bishop Vincent Long and highlights the urgent need to address Australia's housing crisis.

With homelessness on the rise and home ownership rates falling, the statement is a timely reminder of our shared responsibility to ensure that everyone has a place to call home. The story of the Good Samaritan is given as an example to Catholics, and to the broader community, as we confront this challenge together.

Bishop Vincent who is Chair of the [Australian Catholic Social Justice Council](#) delivered a powerful call to action on homelessness and housing insecurity at the launch.

Bishop Vincent also expressed concern about the withdrawal of modest government assistance through the Status Resolution Support Service to some asylum seekers at risk of homelessness.

“Asylum seekers, strangers in our land, are depending on this support to keep a roof over their heads as well as to feed and clothe themselves and their families,” Bishop Vincent said.

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Jesuit Refugee Services Parramatta-based Arrupe Project Manager Maeve Brown welcomed the emphasis on the plight of asylum seekers living in local communities across Western Sydney.

The launch featured an address by CatholicCare Melbourne CEO Netty Horton who has dedicated her working life to advocacy for change for homeless people. Keen to address the popular misconception that homelessness is a choice, Netty stated that there is a need for more viable alternatives for homeless people.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Chief Executive Officer Jack de Groot outlined the society’s work with vulnerable people in Western Sydney including outreach to the homeless through the Vinnies Van active in Penrith and Parramatta.

“It is in the communities that we respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters,” Jack said.

Sr Louise McKeogh FMA, Diocese of Parramatta Social Justice Coordinator welcomed the decision to hold the 2018 Social Justice Statement launch in Parramatta, reflecting on housing affordability in Western Sydney.

“I’m looking forward to working together to bring the statement to life locally over the next year,” Sr Louise said.

The Australian Catholic Church celebrates Social Justice Sunday on Sunday, 30 September. A range of resources to support local advocacy on these pressing equity issues is available from the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website: www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au.

By Elizabeth Scully