



Federal Pre-Budget Submission 2022-23

January 2022



Jesuit
Social Services
Building a Just Society

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Jesuit Social Services: Who we are and what we do

Jesuit Social Services has been working for over 40 years delivering support services and advocating for improved policies, legislation and resources to achieve strong, cohesive and vibrant communities where every individual can play their role and flourish.

We are a social change organisation working with some of the most marginalised individuals, families and communities, often experiencing multiple and complex challenges. Jesuit Social Services works where the need is greatest and where we have the capacity, experience and skills to make the most difference. Our services span Victoria, New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

Our service delivery and advocacy focuses on these areas:

- **Justice and crime prevention** – people involved with the justice system.
- **Mental health and wellbeing** – people with multiple and complex needs including mental illness, trauma, homelessness and bereavement.
- **Settlement and community building** – recently arrived immigrants and refugees, and disadvantaged communities.
- **Education, training and employment** – people with barriers to education and sustainable employment.
- **Gender Justice** – leadership on the reduction of violence and other harmful behaviours prevalent among boys and men, and new approaches to improve their wellbeing and keep families and communities safe.
- **Ecological justice** – advocacy and research around the systemic change needed to achieve a ‘just transition’ towards a sustainable future, and supporting community members to lead more sustainable lives.

Research, advocacy and policy are coordinated across all program and major interest areas of Jesuit Social Services. Our advocacy is grounded in the knowledge, expertise and experiences of program staff and participants, and academic research and evidence. We seek to influence policies, practices, legislation and budget investment to positively influence people’s lives and improve approaches to address long-term social challenges. We do this by working collaboratively with governments, businesses, the community sector, and communities themselves to build coalitions and alliances around key issues, and building strong relationships with key decision-makers and the community.

Our Learning and Practice Development Unit builds the capacity of our services through staff development, training and evaluation, and articulating and disseminating information on best practice approaches to working with participants and communities across our programs.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which Jesuit Social Services operates and pay respect to their Elders past and present. We express our gratitude for First Nations people’s love and care of people, community, land and all life.

Executive summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many pre-existing social and economic issues in Australia into sharper focus, from homelessness and housing stress, to poverty and disadvantage, family violence, and insecure employment. As an organisation working with some of the most disadvantaged members of the community, we have witnessed firsthand the disproportionate impact of this crisis on already marginalised people and communities.

However, responses to the pandemic have also demonstrated that while these issues are complex, they are not beyond resolution. Evidence-informed measures to increase the level of mental health support, boost income support, and provide housing for people experiencing vulnerability are a few examples that show promise in working towards a more just and humane society.

The climate crisis continues to unfold alongside the pandemic, with 2021 recorded as one of the planet's seven hottest years on record. This is despite back-to-back La Niña events, demonstrating just how strong the trend of long-term warming is.¹ Like COVID-19, climate change is disproportionately impacting on the people with whom we work: people who are more at-risk to the current and predicted acute stressors and long-term impacts of climate change because of where they live, their income, their age, health conditions, disabilities, or where they work. As we look to recover from the pandemic, it is therefore critical that we do not lose sight of the co-occurring climate crisis by ensuring our response is grounded in principles of ecological justice and equity.

In this submission, Jesuit Social Services advocates for:

- a renewables-led recovery that creates jobs in sustainable industries;
- a fairer system of social and employment support that empowers people to reach their full potential;
- an increase in safe, sustainable and energy-efficient social housing to enhance personal health, wellbeing and agency; and
- greater efforts to understand and respond to male violence and other harmful behaviours.

We also outline our case for the Government to redirect spending on arbitrary and indefinite detention towards community-based support for people seeking asylum and refugees; increase Australia's intake of refugees; and provide more funding for settlement services.

In preparing this next Federal Budget, Jesuit Social Services calls on the Government to devote resources towards reducing inequity, prejudice and exclusion and helping ensure people on the margins of society are given every opportunity to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

¹ King, A. (2022). 2021 was one of the hottest years on record – and it could also be the coldest we'll ever see again. The Conversation. ([Weblink](#))

Recommendations

1. *Ecological justice*

- Invest in a renewables-led recovery and economic stimulus that creates jobs in clean energy, land management, and other regenerative and sustainable industries that can build the economy of the future.
- Prioritise investment in programs of ecological literacy, skills training and employment in regenerative and sustainable industries in marginalised communities and those living within degraded and at-risk ecosystems.
- Recognising the collective effort required to achieve this goal, we recommend that governments establish coordinating bodies that facilitate cross-sector collaboration to work towards a just transition. This should include engagement across all levels of government, together with industry, researchers and technical experts, environmental organisations, the community services sector and communities themselves.
- Increase funding and resources for organisations and communities seeking to trial, test and implement climate change adaptation, mitigation and transformation activities.
- Resource the establishment and coordination of place-based, cross-sector, resilience coalitions at the local government scale to incorporate the knowledge and relationships held by the community sector and community leaders into adaptation planning and policies.

2. *A fair social safety net*

- Increase the base rate of JobSeeker and related payments by at least \$25 per day.
- Commit to ongoing indexation of payments and fund the establishment of a Social Security Commission to advise the Parliament on the ongoing adequacy of income support payments.
- Extend eligibility for JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and related payments to people on bridging visas and other temporary visa holders.
- End compulsory trials of the cashless debit card scheme and only pursue forms of income management that are voluntary, developed by communities and linked to other services as part of a holistic approach to supporting people in need.

3. *Employment services*

- Replace the compliance-focused jobactive system, including inflexible mutual obligation requirements, with a new model that prioritises funding for intensive, flexible and individualised training and support for disadvantaged people seeking work.
- Replace the Community Development Program with a model in line with that proposed by Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory that is: community-driven; based on genuine, long-term collaboration across governments, employers, Indigenous organisations and communities; and facilitates participation and community development in remote areas, including work on services and projects identified by, and with value for, remote communities.
- Implement a federal social procurement policy that includes clear and ambitious targets for creating meaningful employment opportunities for people experiencing disadvantage.

4. *Housing*

- Partner with State and Territory governments to increase investment in safe, sustainable and energy-efficient social housing, targeting the building of 30,000 new social housing dwellings as an immediate priority, with a particular focus on increasing the stock of public housing.
- Partner with State and Territory governments to retrofit all existing social housing with energy efficiency upgrades.
- Commit funding to the State and Territory Governments to increase the range (diversity) and availability (quantity) of supported housing options, including supported residential services, for different cohorts of people with complex and multiple needs – including specific initiatives, for example, for young people, single people, women, people with experience of trauma, people with disability and people with mental ill-health.
- Increase funding to the State and Territory Governments to invest in housing and homelessness services to close the gap in the rates of homelessness and overcrowding experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

5. *Gender justice*

- Invest in workforce capacity-building across large institutions, based on our Man Box research, Modelling Respect and Equality program and Unpacking the Man Box workshops, to support people who work with boys and men to challenge harmful stereotypes and promote respect and equality.
- Invest in national coordinated data collection, research and evaluations to understand and address the complex causes of family violence and inform evidence-based interventions, specifically:
 - Incorporate data within the National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women survey to better understand the behaviours and attitudes of men and boys in relation to [The Man Box norms](#) by funding Jesuit Social Services' research and data collection.
 - Provide funding for the national roll-out of Jesuit Social Services' Adolescent Man Box Survey.
- Fund research and program development to address the root causes of harmful sexual behaviours among young people behaviours such as Jesuit Social Services' Worried About Sex and Pornography Project (WASAPP) where we are collaborating with academics, practitioners, and governments to co-design an online early intervention for children and young people.
- Expand the *Rights Resilience and Respectful Relationships Curriculum* nationally with the Federal Government to play a role in sharing best practice and effective implementation across states.
- Commit long-term funding for Jesuit Social Services' programs Starting Over and Restore to provide restorative responses to adolescents showing violent behaviour in the home, and lower the age of eligibility for Starting Over. The current age of eligibility is 10 to 16 years old. Intervention is needed even earlier, to work with children at the first signs of vulnerability to violence.

6. *People seeking asylum*

- Expand Australia's Humanitarian Program to at least 30,000 places annually in response to growing global protection needs and ensure the program remains non-discriminatory and prioritises the resettlement of the most vulnerable refugees.
- Provide an additional 20,000 humanitarian visas to refugees from Afghanistan.

- End the punitive approach toward people seeking asylum, including by abolishing Temporary Protection Visas and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas, ending offshore processing, and ensuring against prolonged and indefinite detention
- Enhance access to family reunions for refugee and humanitarian entrants, including considering the Refugee Council of Australia’s recommendation to develop a humanitarian family reunion program of 10,000 places annually, outside of the Humanitarian Program, in consultation with refugee community members and organisations and other relevant bodies.

7. *Settlement services for newly arrived people*

- Provide long-term funding for services that support asylum seekers and refugees, such as Jesuit Social Services’ Settlement Program, to ensure people can access the support they need throughout and beyond the pandemic.
- Enable services funded under the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program (SETS) to respond to the settlement needs of newly arrived people beyond the current post-arrival five-year period of eligibility.
- Increase investment in interpreter services for SETS and reinstate a dedicated funding stream to complement settlement service contracts.
- Expand the eligibility of the Status Resolution Support Services Program (SRSS) to ensure all people seeking asylum who are facing financial hardship can access support as they await the outcome of their applications for asylum.

1. **Ecological justice**

Last year, Jesuit Social Services’ latest [Dropping Off the Edge report](#) was released—the fifth edition of research spanning over 20 years, which maps disadvantage by location. The report identifies where entrenched and persistent disadvantage is located and demonstrates the complex web of challenges faced by those communities. For the first time, *Dropping Off the Edge 2021* includes environmental indicators alongside social, economic, education and health measures. The findings show that communities that experience persistent disadvantage often also experience disproportionate environmental injustice, represented by factors such as air pollution,² heat stress,³ and less green open spaces resulting in fewer natural features such as trees, flora and fauna⁴.

Ecological injustice is evident globally, where the effects of rising temperatures, more severe droughts, bushfires and extreme weather events are disproportionately affecting the lives of those already facing marginalisation. Disasters, smoke exposure, infrastructure stress, service disruption, public health stress, the impacts of species loss and the long-term need for a just recovery to build communities of resilience demand a discerning and long-term vision for Australia.

In order to ensure those least able to cope with climate change receive the support they need to adapt, increasing attention is being paid to the idea of a ‘just transition’⁵ – that is, moving from current

² Tanton, R., Dare, L., Miranti, R., Vidyattama, Y., Yule, A. and McCabe, M. (2021), *Dropping Off the Edge 2021: Persistent and multilayered disadvantage in Australia*, Jesuit Social Services: Melbourne. Indicator 32. Pg 236.

³ Ibid. Indicator 34. Pg 236.

⁴ Ibid. Indicators 33 and 35. Pg 236.

⁵ See, Jesuit Social Services (2019) *Expanding the conversation: Ecological Justice series Just Transitions*,

untenable economic and social systems to an ecologically sustainable, zero greenhouse gas emissions world in an effective and equitable way. Clear parameters are required by government to ensure this transition does not replicate the harmful power structures that drive existing inequality, but rather harnesses the potential for transformational change. For example, in the Northern Territory, there is growing interest in the economic opportunities presented by renewables; without clear parameters set by government, there is a risk that new solar projects could perpetuate the pattern of old industries – extracting value from Aboriginal land without the participation or benefit of traditional owners and local communities. Proactive policy responses, genuine community involvement and carefully targeted social protection will be crucial to achieving a just transition.

The outcomes of any path taken will be unpredictable and require flexible but considered responses. Our future depends on the mobilisation of all sectors – government, community and private – around a collective, collaborative commitment to reduce emissions and a just and sustainable future.

Community service organisations (CSOs) are highly vulnerable and not well prepared to respond to climate change or extreme weather events, with many small and medium-sized organisations at risk of permanent closure or service disruption as a result of major damage to physical infrastructure and disruptions to critical services. The detailed consequences of major disruptions to social service provision for people experiencing poverty and inequality – for whom CSOs are the shock absorbers for everyday adversity as well as crises – are very serious as they impact the basic needs for human survival: homelessness, deprivation, hunger, isolation and death. At present, CSOs perceive an overwhelming range of barriers to action. Key amongst these is a lack of financial resources and skills and the concern that adaptation is ‘beyond the scope’ of the sector’s core business.

In recognising the urgent need to mitigate and adapt to climate change, Jesuit Social Services’ [Centre for Just Places](#) has been delivering climate adaptation and resilience workshops across metropolitan Melbourne. In doing so, we aim to build place-based climate resilience coalitions and strengthen collaboration between CSOs and local governments to build resilience to extreme weather and protect the health and wellbeing of those most at-risk. A transformative approach to adaptation goes beyond emergency management, addressing the underlying drivers of vulnerability. CSOs hold local knowledge and, through their relationships with the community, can best understand the vulnerabilities, strengths and appropriate responses best suited to their local community. Building place-based, cross-sector coalitions enables this knowledge to be incorporated into adaptation planning and policy development to build broader community resilience.

Recommendations

- Invest in a renewables-led recovery and economic stimulus that creates jobs in clean energy, land management, and other regenerative and sustainable industries that can build the economy of the future.
- Prioritise investment in programs of ecological literacy, skills training and employment in regenerative and sustainable industries in marginalised communities and those living within degraded and at-risk ecosystems.
- Recognising the collective effort required to achieve this goal, we recommend that governments establish coordinating bodies that facilitate cross-sector collaboration to work towards a just

transition. This should include engagement across all levels of government, together with industry, researchers and technical experts, environmental organisations, the community services sector and communities themselves.

- Increase funding and resources for organisations and communities seeking to trial, test and implement climate change adaptation, mitigation and transformation activities.
- Resource the establishment and coordination of place-based, cross-sector, resilience coalitions at the local government scale to incorporate the knowledge and relationships held by the community sector and community leaders into adaptation planning and policies.

2. A fair social safety net

In an economic downturn triggered by a public health crisis that has multiplied challenges for many, we must focus on how best we can support people in need. As we continue to adapt, we must avoid returning to the pre-COVID reality, where people were punished for not having work, where compliance with arbitrary obligations was prioritised over real support, and where the needs of disadvantaged people were overlooked. Further, the Government must seek, to the fullest extent possible, not to compound existing disadvantage or create additional disadvantage. To achieve this, we need a fair system of social and employment support that empowers people to reach their full potential.

The impact of the temporary increase to JobSeeker through the Coronavirus Supplement was profound. With this increase, some of our participants were able to access rental accommodation, to afford medication or purchase items as simple, but essential, as warm clothes. We witnessed positive changes, such as a decrease in substance misuse, and some participants achieved a measure of stability in their lives that they hadn't previously enjoyed. Crucially, our participants had hope. Their outlook changed. These insights are in line with findings that the Coronavirus Supplement lifted many people out of poverty.⁶

In light of this, the Federal Government's decision to raise the JobSeeker, Parenting Payment, Youth Allowance and Austudy payments by only \$50 per fortnight on pre-COVID levels was disappointing and has seen recipients once again consigned to living below the poverty line and struggling to pay for essentials such as food, rent and medicine.

With ongoing economic uncertainty and a highly competitive job market, the importance of a fair social safety net is only magnified. Jesuit Social Services supports ACOSS' Raise the Rate campaign to increase the base rate of JobSeeker and related payments by at least \$25 per day, and to establish a social security commission to advise Parliament on the ongoing adequacy of future income support payments from a social justice perspective.⁷ Eligibility for social security should be expanded and barriers to receiving income support, such as onerous mutual obligation and income management measures, including the cashless debit card scheme, should be removed.

Recommendations

- Increase the base rate of JobSeeker and related payments by at least \$25 per day.

⁶ Hayward, D., Ralston, L. and Raysmith, H. (2020). Social policy during the coronavirus recession: A fairy tale with an unhappy ending? A case study of Victoria, Australia, p. 8, ([Weblink](#))

⁷ See: <https://raisetherate.org.au/about/>

- Commit to ongoing indexation of payments and fund the establishment of a Social Security Commission to advise the Parliament on the ongoing adequacy of income support payments.
- Extend eligibility for JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and related payments to people on bridging visas and other temporary visa holders.
- End compulsory trials of the cashless debit card scheme and only pursue forms of income management that are voluntary, developed by communities and linked to other services as part of a holistic approach to supporting people in need.

3. Employment services

Jobactive

Evidence shows that the federal employment services system, with its focus on compliance and meeting narrowly prescribed outcomes, is failing disadvantaged people looking to secure work.⁸ With current jobactive contracts extended until June 2022 while a government trial of a new model takes place in two regions, Jesuit Social Services believes that any new system must enable the time and resources to be invested in those who are most disadvantaged. The most effective support for disadvantaged people occurs through building a relationship with a person and taking the time to understand their capabilities, strengths, hopes and aspirations. In addition, post-placement support and mentoring for individuals, and support for prospective employers, must be a focus of any new system.

The Community Development Program

The Community Development Program (CDP), the federal remote-area employment scheme, has failed to deliver meaningful training or employment outcomes for participants, the majority of whom are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, while setting onerous requirements and significant penalties for compliance failures. Under the CDP, people have been expected to undertake compulsory work, at an hourly rate below the minimum wage, within a centralised system that has led to a decline in local decision-making and discretion in its implementation. While some reforms were implemented in March 2019, this scheme is overdue for replacement.

Jesuit Social Services supports a model in line with that proposed by Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APO NT) that is community-driven and fosters long-term collaboration across governments, employers, Indigenous organisations and communities.⁹ The new scheme should focus on job creation to increase employment and reduce poverty. APO NT's proposal envisages a shift in resources away from the administration of compliance obligations and into participation and community development in remote areas, including work on meaningful services and projects identified by, and with value for, remote communities.

A federal social procurement policy

The capacity for Federal Government procurement spending to contribute social value should be meaningfully pursued, including in relation to creating sustainable job opportunities for people experiencing disadvantage. The size of government procurement contracts underlines the significant

⁸ Employment Services Expert Advisory Panel. (2020). I Want to Work. ([Weblink](#)); Senate Education and Employment References Committee. (2019). Jobactive: Failing those it is intended to serve. ([Weblink](#)); ACOSS. (2018). Future Employment Services. ([Weblink](#))

⁹ Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT. (2017). Fair Work and Strong Communities. ([Weblink](#)).

potential for a proportion of this spending to be targeted to achieving positive social outcomes, such as driving recruitment of people who are long-term unemployed, have low skill levels and who live in areas of high social disadvantage. While Commonwealth Procurement Rules include reference to considerations such as environmental sustainability, decision-makers should also be required to consider social value and impact as part of procurement processes. The [Victorian Government's Social Procurement Framework](#) is a promising example that could be drawn upon.

Recommendations

- Replace the compliance-focused jobactive system, including inflexible mutual obligation requirements, with a new model that prioritises funding for intensive, flexible and individualised training and support for disadvantaged people seeking work.
- Replace the Community Development Program with a model in line with that proposed by Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory that is: community-driven; based on genuine, long-term collaboration across governments, employers, Indigenous organisations and communities; and facilitates participation and community development in remote areas, including work on services and projects identified by, and with value for, remote communities.
- Implement a federal social procurement policy that includes clear and ambitious targets for creating meaningful employment opportunities for people experiencing disadvantage.

4. Housing

There is significant evidence, compiled by bodies such as the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), economists, community organisations and others that the private property and rental markets do not work effectively for people on the margins – or anyone on a low income. Jesuit Social Services has long called for more innovative responses to improving Australia's affordable and social housing systems, including subsidised and supported housing models.¹⁰ This includes public housing owned and managed by respective State or Territory Governments and community housing managed by not-for-profit agencies.

Every person has the right to an adequate standard of living, which includes the right to adequate housing. Safe and secure housing is foundational for personal health, wellbeing and agency, and helps foster healthier and more cohesive communities. Yet, it is evident from recent budgets that the Australian Government does not treat social housing as a significant part of Australia's public and social infrastructure. Jesuit Social Services supports many people who rely on social housing to meet their accommodation needs – many of whom are experiencing or have experienced homelessness, housing instability and other forms of disadvantage. Safe and affordable housing options are crucial in enabling people to get their lives back on track and pursue aspirations such as finding and retaining employment.

In managing and recovering from the social and economic impacts of these disasters in the coming weeks and months, we call on the Australian Government to recognise the critical importance of social housing as social and public infrastructure. Following from this, we support ACOSS' call for Federal Government investment, in partnership with States and Territories, to construct 30,000 social housing

¹⁰ See: https://jss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/10.-SUB-Federal-Inquiry-IntoHomelessness_FINAL_01Apr2020.pdf

dwellings – a measure that would reduce homelessness and generate jobs.¹¹ Equity Economics estimates these additional dwellings would reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness by approximately 4,500 per year and save \$135 million in direct support costs.¹²

We call for a particular focus on increasing the stock of good-quality public housing, noting that it is unrealistic and unviable to rely too heavily on the private and community housing markets to rapidly expand and adequately provide for the diverse range of needs of those who require social and affordable housing.¹³

Additionally, Jesuit Social Services is concerned to ensure that pre-existing inequities in housing in Australia are not exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. According to research undertaken by Mallee Family Care and the University of Sydney in the Victorian town of Mildura, public housing is commonly “substandard and unsafe and poorly adapted to high temperatures.”¹⁴ These added stressors increase incidents of family violence, substance misuse and significantly impact on the mental health of tenants. We therefore advocate for the Government to partner with State and Territory governments to retrofit all existing social housing with energy efficient upgrades. Further, we emphasise the need for effective implementation of climate safe and energy efficient design in the planning and construction of all new public and community housing, and for this to be enshrined in legislation.

Recommendations

- Partner with State and Territory governments to increase investment in safe, sustainable and energy-efficient social housing, targeting the building of 30,000 new social housing dwellings as an immediate priority, with a particular focus on increasing the stock of public housing.
- Partner with State and Territory governments to retrofit all existing social housing with energy efficiency upgrades.
- Commit funding to the State and Territory Governments to increase the range (diversity) and availability (quantity) of supported housing options, including supported residential services, for different cohorts of people with complex and multiple needs – including specific initiatives, for example, for young people, single people, women, people with experience of trauma, people with disability and people with mental ill-health.
- Increase funding to the State and Territory Governments to invest in housing and homelessness services to close the gap in the rates of homelessness and overcrowding experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

5. Gender justice

Boys and men are in trouble – and they are causing trouble. Not all of them. But too many. We see it in high levels of substance misuse, mental health issues, radicalisation and violence. The impact on women, children, families, communities and society as a whole is profound. As a society we have recently

¹¹ See: <https://www.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/200429-Economic-Recovery-Briefing-PDF-1.pdf>

¹² Equity Economics. (2021). Double return: How investing in social housing can address the growing homelessness crisis and boost Australia’s economic recovery. ([Weblink](#))

¹³ Jesuit Social Services (2021). Submission to Victoria’s 10-year housing strategy consultation. ([Weblink](#))

¹⁴ Lander, J., Breth-Petersen, M., Moait, R., Forbes, C. and Stephens, L., Dickson, M. (2019). Extreme heat driven by the climate emergency: Impacts on the health and wellbeing of public housing tenants in Mildura, Victoria ([Weblink](#))

acknowledged one significant aspect of the problem – violence against women. The focus has been, as it should be, on supporting the victims of this violence. But we need to do much more.

Through its The Men’s Project, Jesuit Social Services has taken steps to better understand and respond to male violence and other harmful behaviours, including through our ‘Man Box’ research, which surveys men and boys on their beliefs about sex, gender and violence. By looking at the root causes of violence and challenging behaviours, The Men’s Project seeks to move from crisis to prevention and early intervention; going up-stream to support boys and men to be their best selves, so they can lead healthier lives free from violence and foster positive relationships. When we engage directly with men and boys, we also contribute to safer communities and better outcomes for the women and children in their lives.

Sadly, COVID-19 has resulted in a spike in family violence, demonstrating that the work of The Men’s Project is more vital than ever before.

Recommendations

To make our communities safer and more respectful, we call on the government to:

- Invest in workforce capacity-building across large institutions, based on our Man Box research, Modelling Respect and Equality program and Unpacking the Man Box workshops, to support people who work with boys and men to challenge harmful stereotypes and promote respect and equality.
- Invest in national coordinated data collection, research and evaluations to understand and address the complex causes of family violence and inform evidence-based interventions, specifically:
 - Incorporate data within the National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women survey to better understand the behaviours and attitudes of men and boys in relation to [The Man Box norms](#) by funding Jesuit Social Services’ research and data collection.
 - Provide funding for the national roll-out of Jesuit Social Services’ Adolescent Man Box Survey.
- Fund research and program development to address the root causes of harmful sexual behaviours among young people behaviours such as Jesuit Social Services’ Worried About Sex and Porn Project (WASAPP) where we are collaborating with academics, practitioners, and governments to co-design an online early intervention for children and young people.
- Expand the *Rights Resilience and Respectful Relationships Curriculum* nationally with the Federal Government to play a role in sharing best practice and effective implementation across states.
- Commit long-term funding for Jesuit Social Services’ programs Starting Over and Restore to provide restorative responses to adolescents showing violent behaviour in the home, and lower the age of eligibility for Starting Over. The current age of eligibility is 10 to 16 years old. Intervention is needed even earlier, to work with children at the first signs of vulnerability to violence.

6. People seeking asylum

The number of people displaced around the world is staggeringly high and continues to grow. The UNHCR estimates that global forced displacement passed 84 million at mid-2021.¹⁵ Last year, we also saw the fall of Kabul and the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan. We have witnessed the devastating impact this has had on the people of Afghanistan – those who are stranded there, those trying to escape

¹⁵ The UN Refugee Agency. (2021). Refugee data finder. ([Weblink](#))

and those who can only watch on from other countries like Australia. Australia has the resources to do more, as demonstrated by its cost blow out of billions on detention centres, and we should do more.

In response to the growing number of people displaced around the world, the Government should increase its Humanitarian Program to 30,000. We acknowledge the recent commitment by the Government to allocate 15,000 visas to Afghan nationals over the next four years, comprising 10,000 humanitarian visas that will come out of an existing humanitarian program of 13,750.¹⁶ In recognition of the urgency and scale of the crisis in Afghanistan, the Government must show compassion and true leadership by providing an immediate, one-off additional intake of 20,000 humanitarian visa holders from Afghanistan, in addition to the 13,750. Besides the clear moral imperative to offer vulnerable people a chance to rebuild their lives, the case to pursue a more generous humanitarian program makes economic sense.¹⁷

Additionally, ending indefinite detention offers an opportunity to redirect significant funding towards supporting refugees and people seeking asylum to settle and integrate into the Australian community. The Federal Government continues to spend over \$1 billion annually on holding people seeking asylum in immigration detention.¹⁸ Health experts have warned that prolonged and arbitrary detention can have profound impacts on the health and wellbeing of detainees.¹⁹ We call on the Government to end the punitive approach toward people seeking asylum by ending offshore processing and ensuring against prolonged and arbitrary detention.

People seeking asylum and refugees living in the community face also major challenges, often living below the poverty line, without access to Government support, away from loved ones and with the uncertainty of three-year Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and five-year Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs). As we highlight below, the COVID-19 pandemic has magnified these challenges. In addition to showing basic respect for human dignity, health and wellbeing, research has found that giving refugees on TPVs and SHEVs permanency is likely to generate approximately \$6.75 billion for the Australian economy over a five-year period.²⁰ We call on the Government to abolish TPVs and SHEVs, and enhance access to family reunions for refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Recommendations

- Expand Australia's Humanitarian Program to at least 30,000 places annually in response to growing global protection needs and ensure the program remains non-discriminatory and prioritises the resettlement of the most vulnerable refugees.
- Provide an additional 20,000 humanitarian visas to refugees from Afghanistan.

¹⁶ Mohammadi, S. A., Sitarah. (2022, January 23). Australia must heed urgent calls for increased visa places for Afghans. The Sydney Morning Herald. [\(Weblink\)](#)

¹⁷ Deloitte Access Economics and Oxfam Australia (August 2019) Economic and social impact of increasing Australia's humanitarian intake, [\(Weblink\)](#)

¹⁸ Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. (2021). Budget 21 continues the Government's detention cost blow out and exclusion of people seeking asylum, refugees and migrants in time of crisis. [\(Weblink\)](#)

¹⁹ Australian Human Rights Commission. (2020). Inspections of Australia's Immigration Detention facilities 2019 report. [\(Weblink\)](#)

²⁰ Van Kooy, J. (2021). Supporting economic growth in uncertain times: Permanent pathways for Temporary Protection visa and Safe Enterprise Haven visa holders. Policy options paper. [\(Weblink\)](#)

- End the punitive approach toward people seeking asylum, including by ending offshore processing, and ensuring against prolonged and indefinite detention, and abolishing Temporary Protection Visas and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas.
- Enhance access to family reunions for refugee and humanitarian entrants, including considering the Refugee Council of Australia’s recommendation to develop a humanitarian family reunion program of 10,000 places annually, outside of the Humanitarian Program, in consultation with refugee community members and organisations and other relevant bodies.

7. Settlement services for newly arrived people

Jesuit Social Services’ Settlement Program

Jesuit Social Services’ [Settlement Program](#) helps to improve social interaction, build capacity and foster a sense of belonging for newly arrived young people, their families and communities. Through individual casework, we develop people’s ability and confidence to access support services. We facilitate people’s independence, enhance their living skills and promote meaningful community engagement. We also run facilitated groups, workshops and information sessions based on participant-identified need, including specific groups for women, elderly people and youth.

Through our Settlement Program, we have witnessed the way in which many people on temporary visas have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic. Their exclusion from safety nets such as JobSeeker, JobKeeper and Medicare continues to have serious social, health and economic impacts.²¹ These impacts are only likely to continue, placing people on temporary visas at ongoing risk of poor physical and mental health, housing stress and homelessness, food insecurity, and family violence.²² This will intensify the demand for support services such as those delivered through Jesuit Social Service’s Settlement Program.

We welcome the Government’s commitment to fund Jesuit Social Services’ Settlement Program until June 2023. However, given that the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on newly arrived people will likely be ongoing, we call on the Government to extend this funding beyond 2023.

Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program

Funding for settlement services must allow for tailored and flexible support that mirrors the non-linear journey toward successful settlement that many newly arrived people experience. Jesuit Social Services believes that services funded under the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Program should be able to respond to the settlement needs of people beyond the current post-arrival five-year period of eligibility. A similarly flexible approach should be adopted regarding English language support provided through the Adult Migrant English Program.

Interpreting services

Interpreting services play a vital role in assisting newly arrived people to navigate the complexities of starting over in a new country and engaging with the services and support they need. This assistance is not only a practical necessity but also a key personal support for often vulnerable people who may be

²¹ Dale, S. (no date). All in this together? The impact of COVID-19 on refugees and people seeking asylum. Community Legal Centres NSW. Retrieved January 24, 2022, from [\(Weblink\)](#)

²² Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. (2020). ASRC submission to COVID19 Senate Inquiry exposes extreme vulnerability due to Government neglect. [\(Weblink\)](#)

experiencing social isolation. From 2019, the SETS programs have incurred the costs of engaging interpreters – an expense previously covered by the Commonwealth as part of contracted services. This is an additional cost with no additional funding to cover it and means that service providers have to carefully consider the engagement of interpreters from a budgeting perspective, with potential impacts on the effectiveness of support.

Status Resolution Support Services

The Federal Government's changes to the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) have reduced the number of people eligible for this vital support, placing people seeking asylum at risk of destitution and increasing demands on the community services they turn to for support. As the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre notes, changes to SRSS eligibility have "increased the need for people seeking asylum to find work (any work) without adequate support to develop their capacity to do so, or adequate guards against their exploitation in the local labour market."²³ The tightening of eligibility requirements for the SRSS program should be reversed to ensure that vulnerable people can access this vital social support.

Recommendations

- Provide long-term funding for services that support asylum seekers and refugees, such as Jesuit Social Services' Settlement Program, to ensure people can access the support they need throughout and beyond the pandemic.
- Enable services funded under the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program (SETS) to respond to the settlement needs of newly arrived people beyond the current post-arrival five-year period of eligibility.
- Increase investment in interpreter services for SETS and reinstate a dedicated funding stream to complement settlement service contracts.
- Expand the eligibility of the Status Resolution Support Services Program (SRSS) to ensure all people seeking asylum who are facing financial hardship can access support as they await the outcome of their applications for asylum.

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²³ Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. (2019). Towards an optimal employment strategy for people seeking asylum in Victoria. ([Weblink](#))