

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

Serving Communities with Courage and Compassion

26 – 28 February 2020
Melbourne

www.css.org.au | #ServingCommunities

MEDIA RELEASE

28 January 2020

The Call to the Margins at the Catholic Social Services Conference

The opening keynote address at the 2020 Catholic Social Services conference will re-issue Pope Francis' call to the margins. To be delivered by Francis Sullivan and entitled *Margin Call – The Risk of Integrity*, the address will present a challenging overview of the state of Australian society and the Australian Catholic Church and explore the root of our calling to serve in ministries of the Church.

Sullivan is well-qualified to address these issues. He spent five years as CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council during the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Prior to that role, he was Secretary-General of the Australian Medical Association following 14 years as CEO of Catholic Health Australia. He is currently foundational executive chair of the Mercy Partners' One Mater Project, overseeing the implementation of a single board of governance to unify all Mater hospitals and health services across Queensland. He has been committed and active in forums like the forthcoming conference to promote "reform, renewal and refreshment in the Church".

Specifically, Sullivan will address how, in the context of the Church's current standing, we creatively and courageously traverse our way through the minefield of damage so that we can seize the opportunities for growth, truth and renewal. What opportunities are there for the Catholic social services sector to challenge social issues in new ways and build a more just and equitable society for all Australians? To what extent is this conference and other upcoming opportunities possible catalysts for the Catholic social services sector to amplify the voice of the most neglected and those still 'abused' in our society? Significantly, Catholic social services represent a good news story of the 'church' in the volume, range and diversity of their outreach to those who are most excluded and vulnerable in our society.

The biennial Catholic Social Services conference, *Serving Our Communities with Courage and Compassion*, will be held at the Catholic Leadership Centre, Victoria Parade, East Melbourne on 26-28 February 2020.

The conference will also include sessions on Catholic social services 'journeying' effectively with our First Peoples, the homeless, children and vulnerable people, regional Australians and those impacted by domestic violence, disability and/or the justice system. Other foci will be eco-justice, best practice in governance of ministries, formation for ministry, the Plenary Council, and fostering emerging leaders.



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During the conference dinner, Ursula Stephens, CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia, will deliver the 2020 Mary MacKillop Oration. The conference will conclude with a media masterclass on engaging media to advance mission.

All details can be found on the conference website, www.css.org.au/ServingCommunities

CONFERENCE SERVICES FOR MEDIA

Media representatives are invited to attend the conference in Melbourne. There will be a dedicated Media Room where interviews, podcasts and video recordings can take place. Interviews can be arranged with specific conference speakers, upon request. Interviews can take place before the conference, during the conference, or afterwards.

Also, each day, the top photos from each session at the conference will be saved into a specific Dropbox folder, which can be accessed by Media. For any media representatives wanting access to this Dropbox folder, which will also include speaker presentations, and other important media-related information, please contact Fiona Basile.

Fiona Basile, on behalf of CSSV

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