



COLLABORATIVE STRENGTHS AMONG MAJOR CHURCH PROVIDERS

19 February 2024

More than 200 participants from various social, health, education, parish, and Church ministries are registered to attend this week's national Catholic social services conference – [Commons Commonality Common Good](#) – in Melbourne, from 21-23 February.

The conference boasts a distinguished lineup of keynote [speakers](#), panelists and [workshop](#) presenters over three days engaging in and fostering robust discussions on critical issues facing our society and exploring innovative solutions to contribute to the common good. Emphasising the need for collaboration across faith denominations, a panel on day one will explore the theme 'Unlocking our shared DNA: Reflections from major church providers' with [Ms Kasy Chambers](#), executive director of Anglicare Australia, Dr Robyn Sampson, chief executive officer of [Baptist Care](#), and [Ms Claerwen Little](#), national director of UnitingCare Australia.

Ms Little says she's looking forward to the opportunity to being on a panel with her colleagues and to spend time talking about how we can—better together—create a just and more equitable society for everyone.

'We have been in collaboration over a variety of social policy issues for many, many years now. It is a very productive collaboration, and we see that we have more in common than not, given that we all derive our services from a deep commitment to social justice and God's mission in the world.'

'Collectively, we run a significant portion of community services nationally, and we speak with the weight of this experience. What we have in common is our deep commitment to humanity, equality, and the right of every person to fully participate and flourish. We may use different language, but we share this commitment.'

Monique Earsman, executive director of [Catholic Social Services Australia](#) highlights the conference as an event for collective action. 'Our national conference is more than just a dialogue; it calls for meaningful change through collaboration, such as addressing persistent disadvantage. In the face of soaring living costs, many in our communities seek support more than ever. This gathering provides a unique opportunity to innovate and forge sustainable long-term solutions for change.'

Elaborating on the Conference theme, executive director of [Catholic Social Services Victoria](#), Josh Lourensz says, 'This conference aims to contribute to creating true communities out of a common effort, for the common good. The common good isn't the utilitarian idea of "the best for the most people". It's about looking at what each person needs to live a flourishing life. And we all have a role to play in this.'

'In social services, we often work in a pluralistic space, often collaborating with those in health, education, parish, volunteer and faith-based organisations, and groups. This strength is what we want to continue to build upon. Whenever we're out in the margins serving the most vulnerable, we're all part of the mission of the Church.'

Registrations for the conference have closed. However, opportunities are available for media representatives to attend Conference sessions, and to conduct one-on-one interviews with speakers, panellists, and workshop presenters. View the full conference program [here](#). Follow on social media using #commongood

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