



Welcome Letter

Thank you for joining this local effort to write letters or illustrate cards to raise the Catholic voice on the issue of homelessness in Australia. You are invited to take this opportunity to speak as one to send a resounding message to our politicians. This year Mary MacKillop's Feast Day on the 8th of August coincides with National Homelessness Week which is from Monday 1st to Sunday 7th August. To acknowledge Mary's work with the homeless and her giftedness in writing letters we are writing to our political leaders to say that we believe housing is a human right; one that has been ignored for too long, as on any given night in Australia more than 116,000 people are homeless.

We also want to acknowledge that there is a human face behind the homelessness statistics. In fact, Mary MacKillop herself, was subject to housing insecurity, from when she was a few months old until she was 24. In that time, she lived in 19 different temporary homes. So, you see, homelessness doesn't discriminate – the homeless population can comprise people of all ages and backgrounds. It can be a one-off occurrence or a long-term situation. The experience of homelessness in Australia has long term impacts on a person's mental, physical, and financial wellbeing.

This toolkit will provide you with the tools you need to advocate for the homeless in your community. In Mary MacKillop's life, she was able to find effective solutions for housing the homeless with scant resources. May the Holy Spirit guide us in our efforts that we may too, find effective solutions to eradicate homelessness and ensure that people do not have to sleep on the streets or in insecure housing.

With thanks,

Maria Fracalossi

Josephite Mission and History Centre.



26 July 2022

Dear Everyone,

We've received the attached letter from Maria Fracalossi from the Josephite Mission and History Centre in Hobart, asking for our participation in an initiative for Mary MacKillop's Feast. We're delighted to support this project and hope that you might be able to include it in your own planning for the feast.

We know that many of us have been really concerned about the accelerating number of people facing homelessness across Australia. It seems opportune then, that we've been invited to be part of this initiative. As Maria points out, Mary MacKillop suffered homelessness a number of times throughout her life, so that the fact that her feast takes place at the end of Homelessness Week seems most fortuitous.

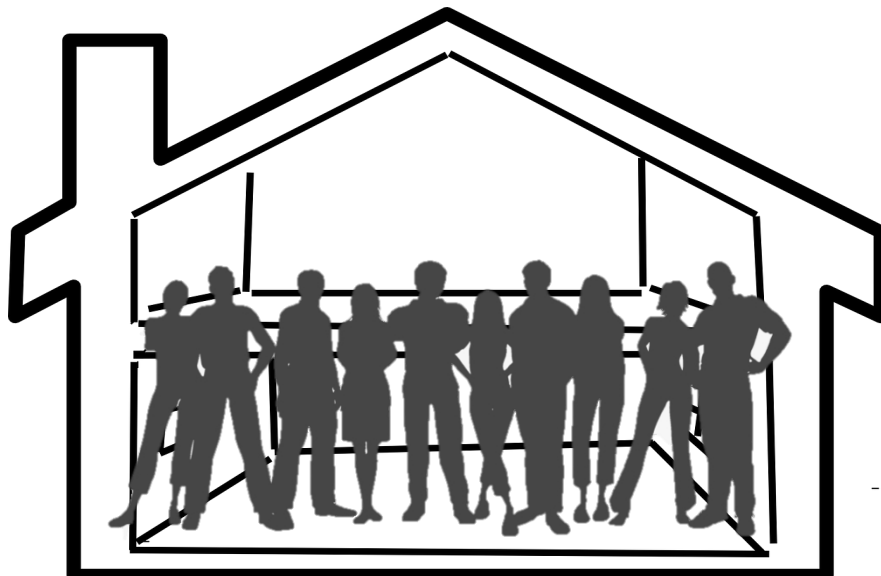
The theme for Homelessness Week 2022, ***To end homelessness we need a plan***, highlights the urgency, both to raise awareness of the crisis, and also to drive effective social change for homelessness in Australia. So as a part of our involvement in the feast of Mary MacKillop on the 8th August, Maria is inviting us to engage in one or more of the following:

- Include a prayer in the feast day celebrations: "that the Governments across Australia will take action to alleviate homelessness and increase funding for affordable housing"
- Invite students in homerooms to write a message of hope or a request of Government on the housing template provided (these could be pinned in a public space and then later collected and sent to the PM/premier)
- Write to the PM/premier/local member asking for action (see election Kit for information)
- Share your asks on social media and use the hashtags #endhomelessness #buildsocialhousing to be featured on our socials
- Participate in the ***USING OUR VOICE*** zoom on 11 August to learn about taking positive action in this and other areas

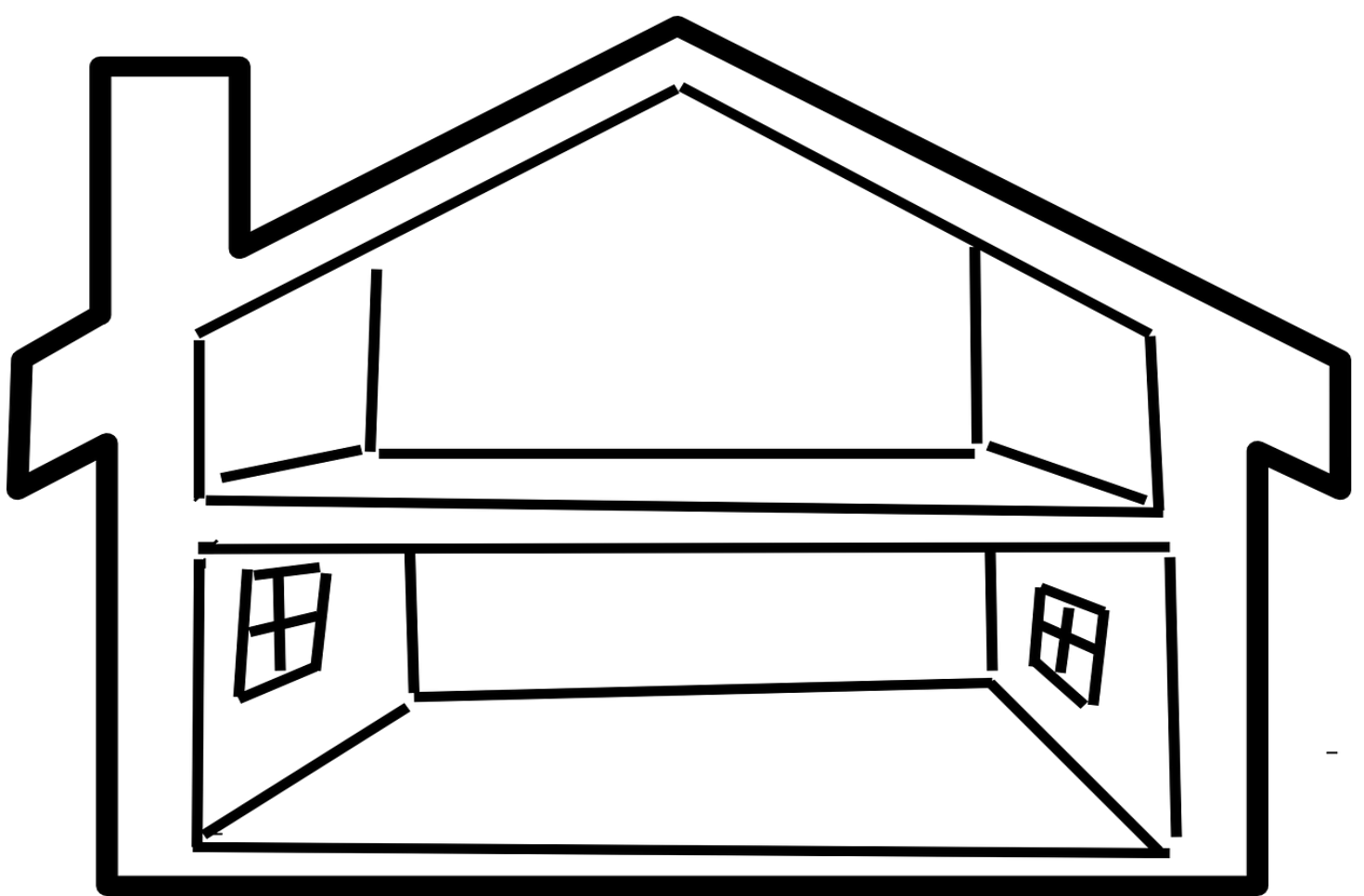
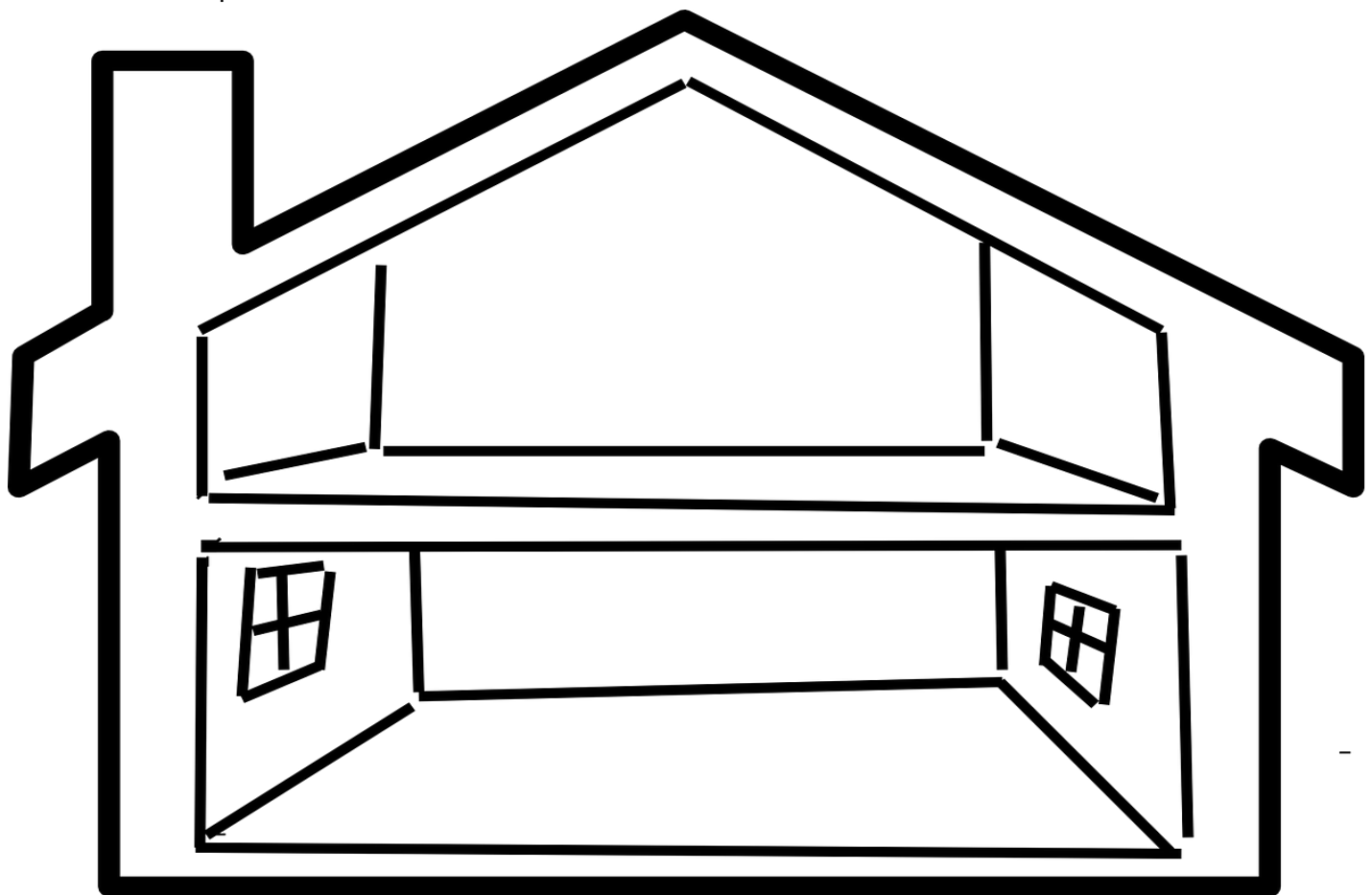
Many thanks for considering this request.

Gratefully,

Jan



Template for commitments





Josephite Justice Office
PO Box 1508 North Sydney NSW 2059

8 August 2022

The Honourable Anthony Albanese
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Albanese,

Re: Housing affordability and the desperate situations facing homeless people

I write to you on behalf of the Josephite Justice Office, a ministry of the Congregations of the Sisters of St Joseph. We educate, advocate and work for justice, for earth and for people, especially those pushed to the margins.

On the feast of Mary MacKillop, we wish to express our deep concern, in her spirit, for the thousands of Australians who are trapped in homelessness at this time. On any given night, more than 116,000 Australians are homeless, many of them, families and older women. Almost 220,000 people are being supported by homelessness services.

At the same time, we are aware that, right across Australia, individuals and families are facing escalating rental stress and limited availability of affordable places to rent, and are being pushed to the verge of homelessness. The critical shortage of social and affordable homes, exacerbated by low wages, the pandemic, and the rising costs of housing right across the board, is confronting our nation as a stark and glaring reality. Social housing has become extremely difficult to access; in 2021 more than 160,000 households were on the waiting list.

In the past fifty years, we have seen Australia move from a society where housing was seen as a universal right, to one where it is now predominantly viewed as a safety net for those most in need. Since the sixties, when Australia distributed private land and housing space more equitably than any other developed country, the strategy that supported the right of shelter for all has been largely abandoned. Government policies have not even kept pace with, let alone improved, the rates of housing the homeless and those at the margins.

Only Government can initiate the policies that will change this situation.

We are aware that Julie Collins, the Minister for Housing and Homelessness has released Labor's plan to alleviate the crisis, and that these initiatives include a number of strategies, including a **Housing Australia Future Fund** to build 30,000 social and affordable housing properties in its first five years. These plans are welcome, but sadly fall short of urgent needs. Emergency policies introduced during the pandemic, as well initiatives of other Governments across the world have shown us that it is possible to do more.

*The Josephite Justice Office(JJO) is a ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph.
We educate, advocate and work for justice, for earth and for people,
especially for those pushed to the edges of society.*

We urge your government as a matter of urgency

1. **To initiate Law Reform at all three levels of government** to facilitate innovative social and affordable housing
2. To work with state governments to stipulate that at least **30% of new homes built on public land and at least 15% of new homes in private developments be affordable rentals**
3. To legislate to guarantee **adequate protection** (for both tenants and landlords).
4. To undertake a **review of Commonwealth Rent Assistance** (CRA) to ensure that it meets the needs of all low-income renters

As you yourself have stated unequivocally, Mr Albanese, investing in infrastructure and social housing is vital to the economic recovery. It would safeguard the lives of some of the most at risk Australians at this time. Changing policies, unlocking capital, supporting local affordable housing developments and building allies in community, industry and government will be key for the future, economically and socially.

It remains our hope that the commitment you made to affordable housing when you assumed leadership of this Government will be translated more generously into the policies being proposed by thinking and concerned Australians.

Yours sincerely and in hope of a better future,



Sister Jan Barnett rsj
Josephite Justice Coordinator
Sisters of St Joseph
9 Mount St North Sydney
M 0403 634 534

*The Josephite Justice Office(JJO) is a ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph.
We educate, advocate and work for justice, for earth and for people,
especially for those pushed to the edges of society.*



Josephite Justice Office
PO Box 1508 North Sydney NSW 2059

8 August 2022

The Honourable Dominic Perrottet
Premier
Parliament House
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Premier Perrottet,

Re: Housing affordability and the desperate state of homelessness in NSW

I write to you on behalf of the Josephite Justice Office, a ministry of the Congregations of the Sisters of St Joseph. We educate, advocate and work for justice, for earth and people, especially those pushed to the margins.

On this feast of Mary MacKillop, we wish to express our deep concern, in her spirit, for the thousands of Australians who are trapped in homelessness at this time. We had hoped that the recent budget would have included a substantial commitment to new social housing. Instead, we have been promised little more than a token gesture, which will go no way to assist the rapidly growing numbers of those deprived of the security of a home. More than ten years of negligence have been exacerbated by the accelerating gap between wealth and poverty, unaffordable housing prices, and the pandemic, bushfires, and floods of the past three years. There are now over 50,000 people on the social housing waiting list in NSW, many of whom include older citizens, children and young people, First Nations people, refugees and asylum seekers, and people experiencing mental illness.

Recurrent funding for social housing which includes 290 new dwellings, stimulus funding for specialised services and Together Home and the Land and Housing Corporation in this year's NSW budget, are appreciated, but are clearly miniscule compared with the vast needs facing homeless people and indeed our whole society. The promise of 290 dwellings at a time when over 50,000 are needed is a stark reminder of the crisis.

We urge your government to increase housing affordability through substantial financial and policy change:

1. To introduce **inclusionary zoning** that includes 15% on private land and 30% on public land
2. To provide adequate **incentives** to accelerate the development **of affordable housing**
3. To work with the Federal Government to **reform housing tax concessions** (e.g. negative gearing, capital gains tax exemptions, tax on empty dwellings and overseas investors), which favour the wealthy and increase housing prices.

*The Josephite Justice Office(JJO) is a ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph.
We educate, advocate and work for justice, for earth and for people,
especially for those pushed to the edges of society.*

It remains our hope that the commitment you made to affordable housing when you assumed leadership of this Government will be translated into the policies being proposed by thinking and concerned Australians.

Yours sincerely and in hope of a better future,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Barnett R.S.J." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Sister Jan Barnett rsj
Josephite Justice Coordinator
Sisters of St Joseph
9 Mount St North Sydney
M 0403 634 534

*The Josephite Justice Office(JJO) is a ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph.
We educate, advocate and work for justice, for earth and for people,
especially for those pushed to the edges of society.*

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

In the past 5 years, the many stories about the growing gap between rich and poor in Australia, continue to remind us as Josephites, of the underpinning core of our passion and work for those who have been pushed to the edge of our society.

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement for 2018–19 has the title **A PLACE TO CALL HOME: Making a home for everyone in our land**. It confronts the growing challenge of homelessness and housing insecurity in Australia.

The latest Census figures show that more than 116,000 Australians are homeless – something unacceptable for a rich and well-resourced nation like ours. Yet these people are only the tip of the iceberg: welfare agencies report growing numbers of families and individuals struggling to meet the cost of mortgages or rents and turning to specialist housing services, which are often unable to meet demand.

The Scriptural basis of the Statement is Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–35), about an outsider who does something that rich and influential men refuse to do: he stops to help a man in desperate need, takes him to safety and pays for his care. The Statement also draws on the example of Pope Francis, who has reached out to men and women on the streets of Rome and reminded us forcefully of the rights of people experiencing homelessness around the world.

The Bishops consider the extent of our housing crisis and Australia's falling rates of home ownership. They focus especially on those in our society who are most vulnerable to housing insecurity and homelessness. We are reminded that safe and secure housing is a human right, asserted both by the Church's social teaching and by the Declaration of Human Rights.

Homelessness is a challenge for all levels of society: for government, for Church and community, and for us as individuals. Each one of us can make a difference and, when we join with others, we can be a real force for change that ensures everyone has a place to call home.



JJAMMers Act – suggestions for ACTION

- Have a special intention for people who are homeless in our feast day prayer
- Get every student to write their prayer or wish for those who are homeless on a picture of a house, post around the school and then send to the local member of Parliament
- Have a lunch time discussion/prayer group to combat violence against women
- Encourage ethical chocolate purchases
- information about School Sleep Out
- Survivor slum/the cage
- Ending homelessness? School debate
- Fundraisers
 - Double prices at canteen for a day
 - Toiletry drive, Food bank, Clothes bank
 - Organise a "Days for Girls" sewing B - <https://www.daysforgirls.org/videos>