



Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian students to open the book on lives less fortunate

A new workbook for use in our nation's schools is set to give secondary students a deeper understanding of poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion in Australia.

The [Brotherhood workbook](#) is an educational resource designed to be used in conjunction with *Brotherhood: Stories of Courage and Resilience* by Fr Jeff O'Hare. This book, first published in 2009, tells the compelling, sometimes heartbreaking but ultimately uplifting stories of 29 Australians who rely on the support of national welfare organisation, the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

Each personal story in the *Brotherhood* book is accompanied by a set of activities and questions in the workbook for students to answer, debate and contemplate. The workbook was produced by a group of eight experts in their field, including school principals, theologians, social justice practitioners, chaplains and a journalist.

"The workbook gives students an insight into why many members of our society can and do fall on hard times, and how it can so easily happen", says Fr Jeff O'Hare, General Manager of Chaplaincy at the Brotherhood. "By being encouraged to think carefully and deeply about these people's circumstances, we hope students gain a greater understanding of the journeys taken by vulnerable and disadvantaged people. It may even motivate some to play a future role in helping shape an Australia that is socially inclusive for everyone."

Greater [social inclusion](#) in Australia is the ultimate aim of the Brotherhood of St Laurence's programs, services, research and advocacy. In a socially inclusive society, people are given the opportunity to fully participate in life. They are able to access education, find a job, earn a fair living, return home each day to safe and secure housing and connect with family, friends and the wider community.

The workbook discusses the brave battles fought and adversities triumphed by many Brotherhood clients. Some of the raw experiences lived through and touched upon in the workbook include war, alcohol and drug addiction, life as a migrant or refugee, mental illness, losing loved ones, long-term illness and injury, bullying and unemployment.

"Some have lived through terribly painful chapters, but the light at the end of the tunnel for many of our clients is the Brotherhood's support. It can help them to reconstruct their lives and look forward to happier times", says Fr O'Hare.

"The *Brotherhood* book and its companion workbook illustrate why each and every person deserves a fair go."

While written with Year 9 and Year 10 students in mind, the workbook can be tailored to suit secondary students of all ages. It is also suitable for integration into a range of subject curriculums, including English, History and Religious Education.

"We're proud and excited to bring this educational resource to schools", said Fr O'Hare. "We hope students find it thought-provoking, and are moved and inspired by the amazing stories explored in it."

The **Brotherhood workbook** will be launched at [Korowa Anglican Girls' School](#), Ranfurly Crescent, Glen Iris on Monday 27 June at 5.00pm. Please RSVP to Bev Hewlett on (03) 9483 1319 or bhewlett@bsl.org.au

For further media information, please contact Peta Levett on (03) 9483 1329 or plevett@bsl.org.au

To order copies of *Brotherhood: Stories of Courage and Resilience* and/or the workbook, please call (03) 9483 1301 or visit [this link](#) to place an order, to download a PDF of the workbook, or for further information.

