



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2015–2020



Brotherhood  
of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

# OUR VISION

An Australia free of poverty.

We work with others to create an Australia free of poverty for this and future generations: a fair, compassionate and just society where all can fully participate in social, civic and economic life, create and share prosperity and treat each other with dignity and respect.

## MISSION

Our mission is to research, develop and implement innovative and high quality services, practices and policies to drive change that benefits all Australians.



## VALUES

The Brotherhood, inspired by our Christian origins, seeks the common good through compassion, with a generosity of spirit and reliance on evidence.

The Brotherhood recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and the traditional custodians of this land.

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## The Brotherhood of St Laurence works in communities across Australia to alleviate and prevent poverty.

To meet the great social and economic challenges that persistent poverty presents to our otherwise prosperous nation, we aim to demonstrate how to **defeat disadvantage through our high quality research, services and policy development**. Further, we aim to have a **national voice** on issues impacting on the most disadvantaged among us.

The Brotherhood is interested in tackling the causes of poverty linked to the way our society and economy are organised as well as the causes of poverty attributed to individual and family factors. We understand that **the experience of poverty involves not only inadequate income but also exclusion from many aspects of social, civic and economic life**. It is also clear to us that persistent poverty in our society has a strong geographic dimension and that solutions must be tailored to the diverse needs of communities. In short, our focus is on particular places and particular groups of people who are vulnerable to poverty and disadvantage. **If our work dissociates people from place it will not succeed.**

**Poverty diminishes us all.** We recognise therefore that all Australians must have the opportunity to genuinely participate in social, civic and economic life if our nation is to truly prosper and advance. Our message to decision makers is underpinned by the goal of 'inclusive growth', whereby the essential interdependence between economic and social policy is recognised: **poverty is not only bad for those affected, it is bad for the economy and bad for us all.**

We believe framing social policy in Australia must also be anchored by a nuanced understanding that **while the modern economy opens new opportunities for disadvantaged people, it confronts them with many new risks**. There is a huge premium placed today on education, skills, work experience and the personal networks people have to support them in finding and retaining work. Similarly, changes to household formation, gender roles, the distribution of caring responsibilities, life course patterns, and to life expectancy itself, present both opportunities and risks.

**Always informed by knowledge and evidence**, we collaborate with others who share our concerns to tackle the challenges of poverty in our complex society. Underpinning all our work, whether it is rolling out a program in an urban or remote community or undertaking a national campaign using social media, is the aim to ensure that **people who are facing disadvantage are able to speak for themselves** and contribute to framing solutions.

At the Brotherhood of St Laurence we believe that **wherever you come from, whoever you are, we all share a human spirit**. It is all too easy to marginalise people as the 'other', and imagine they are not 'like us', but to do that is to deny a powerful common humanity that knits us as people, neighbours and communities together: this is at the heart of the **common good we pursue**.

*'In order to be of contemporary relevance you need to strengthen your tradition, renew your ethos, and modernise your vocation through the ancient truths of your calling.'*

# OUR AIMS

## To prevent and reduce poverty and exclusion from the mainstream of society

This will involve working with people at greatest risk at four life transition stages considered critical to wellbeing: the early years, the transition through school to work, the shifts in and out of work during mid-life, and retirement and ageing.

## To be a national voice on poverty, disadvantage and inequality

This will involve promoting integrated social and economic policies and programs that improve the human capacities, material resources and opportunities of people and communities.

## To develop and deliver high quality and innovative policy, programs and practice

This will involve developing understanding and knowledge through research, community engagement and learnings from practice to create innovative policies and programs to implement and share with others.



# OUR PRIORITIES

Over the next strategy period  
the Brotherhood will:

## Orient our work

so that we engage more with and strengthen the communities where we work so as to reflect local aspirations, and in doing so, help the broader community understand our work and become involved.

## Contribute

to policy, service development and delivery that will strengthen the communities most at risk of poverty and disadvantage, particularly those on the outskirts of major cities and in country areas.

## Take steps

to generate income from diverse sources to ensure our organisation remains strong.

# OUR OBJECTIVES

## To demonstrate

how to reduce disadvantage and increase social, civic and economic participation through quality, evidence-based policy, programs and practice.

## To undertake

quality research, gather knowledge and evaluate evidence to inform and support our work.

## To work collaboratively

and in partnership with others to influence policy and practice.

## To strengthen

our organisational capability to support innovation and respond flexibly to changed circumstances.



## To collaborate

with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ensure the Brotherhood supports their rights and aspirations.



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