

BROTHERHOOD ACTION

BROTHERHOOD AND BODY SHOP IN EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP

Six trainees have successfully graduated from the latest Traineeship Access Course run by the Brotherhood of St Laurence's Employment Action Centre. This certificate presentation ceremony marked the successful beginnings of a three year joint venture between the Body Shop and the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

The Body Shop is sponsoring thirty homeless or "at risk" young people who will be provided with practical employment training in the retail industry while also attending TAFE's Retail Training course two days a week.

The six trainees, who were initially homeless, are now living in stable accommodation and will be gaining valuable retail employment skills for the next year, with a genuine possibility of permanent employment opportunities on completion of the TAFE course.

Bishop Challen, together with the Body Shop's Executive Director Graeme Wise, presented the certificates to the graduates, and addressed the guests about the background and proposed future of this venture into retail traineeships.



Body Shop Executive, Graeme Wise (back left) with trainees (from rear), Justin Davenport, Wayne Birff, Rachel Robinson, Penny McPherson, Heidi O'Day, EAC Trainer Dorothy Rao, Julianne Bond, Body Shop Supervisors Julia Kubincan and Kim Westmorland, Body Shop Managers, Di Hewstone and Liz Hassock and EAC's Traineeship Access Course Co-ordinator, Mike Hanlon

BUDGET ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT

In the lead up to the Federal Budget due to be delivered in August, the Brotherhood of St Laurence has sent detailed policy recommendations to the Federal Government.

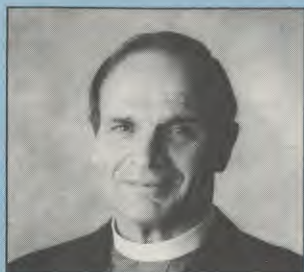
The focus of the submission is the alleviation of hardship associated with unemployment as well as the reduction of unemployment. In its submission, the Brotherhood supports taxation and other reforms which encourage productive investment, create employment and help to ensure a sustainable economic recovery. However, it recommends the tax cuts planned for 1994 to 1996 should be reconsidered, as they neither offer jobs nor incentives for productive activity.

There are currently over 300,000 people who have been unemployed over 12 months and there is not expected to be any significant reduction in this long term unemployment until 1995. The Submission argues that in terms of labour market programs, additional paid work experience

opportunities are urgently needed for the long term jobless to help them return to ongoing work as quickly as possible and to alleviate poverty.

Furthermore, regional areas experiencing high levels of unemployment require special assistance, and the submission explains how such assistance could be provided through local employment initiatives and job creation activities.

Other recommendations include the reduction of hardship through the abolition of a liquid assets test for unemployment and sickness beneficiaries; lifting the level of payment for single unemployed people, sole parent families and those receiving the Job Search Allowance and Young Homeless Allowance; and the introduction of rent assistance for recipients of Austudy.



VIEWPOINT

by

**THE RIGHT REV'D
MICHAEL CHALLEN**
Executive Director

Since I last wrote, our Federal Parliamentarians have been rather preoccupied with what sort of flag we might have in the future and also the behaviour of certain Senators. Those of us who seek some relief from such inane preoccupations perhaps are marvelling at the extraordinary performance of the Fitzroy team in the current AFL matches.

However, on May 12th a Day of Action was held throughout Australia to remind our politicians that the No. 1 priority for them and for us all at this time is to reduce the levels of unemployment by the creation of jobs. This in turn could be achieved by encouraging investment both in productive and ongoing industries and in public works programmes whether by Federal or State Governments.

Most delegations discovered when they met with their own Member that the Federal Government seems to be passively accepting a future level of unemployment of 5.5% and the Coalition, a future level of 7.9%. What astounds me is that there has been no outcry within the community about the resulting human need caused by such a low vision. Ten years ago no politician would have dared to say in public that we have to be resigned to unemployment of 6%.

It is my understanding that the economy exists to serve individuals, families and society as a whole. It is wrong to use people by making them unemployed to control the economy. Jesus said "Man was not made for the Sabbath." I have a feeling He would say in these present times "Man was not made for the economy."

Those of you who have an unemployed youngster or a retrenched mother or father will know what the priority ought to be. Yet we remain quiet about these levels of unemployment and the limited aspirations of our politicians. In a few months time we will be preparing for a Federal election. That could well be the context in which once again we challenge our potential members and our political parties about their specific plans to make our economy serve our brothers and sisters.

Now for some good news. In recent months a leading business firm in Melbourne with a great social conscience joined partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence to make possible traineeships for long term unemployed youth. It was a great joy to see how within six weeks those young people were transformed because they experienced business people being actively interested in them and that indeed there was a place for young people in our society after all. There could well be similar firms who might also join in this partnership which enables our youngsters to have not only jobs but hope and a belief in the worth of our society.

ADVOCACY FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

As part of its efforts to extend protection and adequate support to homeless people, the Brotherhood has presented a submission to the Federal Government's review of the student support scheme, Austudy. The submission highlighted the needs of vulnerable, young, homeless students attempting to complete their secondary education.

The Brotherhood believes education provides an important route out of poverty for people who are disadvantaged. It is important that people who are on low incomes have opportunities to raise their education and skill levels in order to gain improved access to secure employment and to increase their ability to contribute to society.

In order to go some way towards ensuring sufficient support, the Brotherhood recommends immediate additional payments, in the form of rent assistance, to assist homeless and independent Austudy recipients; retaining the current system of grant support to secondary students and those starting tertiary education; better information to young people seeking support as homeless students; and minimising delays in payments.

SEND YOUR 1% TRAINING LEVY TO WORK BEFORE JUNE 30

As June 30 approaches, little time remains for companies which have not yet spent all of their 1% training levy.

Send your money to work by donating your company's 1% training levy to the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The Brotherhood's Employment Action Centre is a fully tax deductible and government recognised training program for the homeless and long term unemployed.

Levies donated to the Brotherhood's Employment Action Centre are considered eligible expenditure on training for taxation purposes. This is your chance to help disadvantaged young people to get a fresh and practical start in life.

Send your donated levy to:

*67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, Vic 3065,
or phone Lindsey Nelson on (03) 480-5400.
In Ballarat, contact Geradine Christou: (053) 333 818*

UNEMPLOYMENT RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS

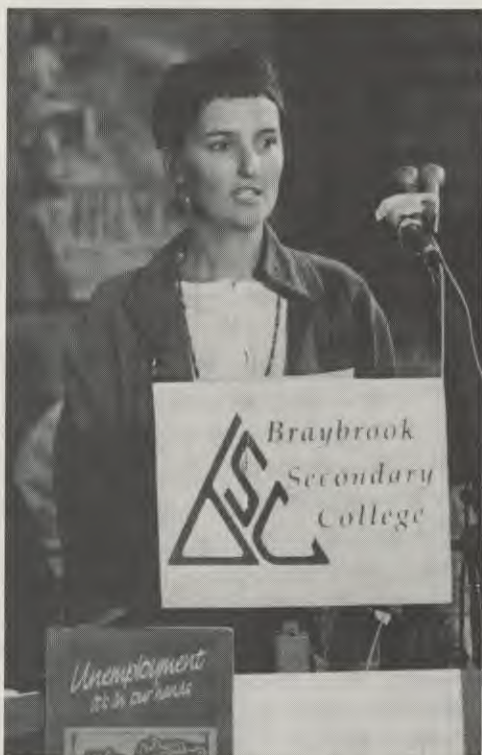
Two new publications, *Unemployed Australia: a resource book*, and a workshop kit entitled *Unemployment - It's in our hands* were launched in April at Braybrook Secondary College.

In launching the publications to an audience of 70 students, school staff and media, Bishop Challen said the title of *Unemployed Australia* was chosen to focus on the under utilisation of Australia's major asset - its people.

Bishop Challen drew attention to the two groups which are badly affected by the recession - our young people, of whom 32.7% are unemployed and the long term jobless (unemployed for 12 months or more) whose numbers now exceed 311,000.

Unemployed Australia by Kirsten Larwill uses statistical data and personal experience to assist senior students and teachers to answer the central questions about unemployment.

Unemployment - It's In Our Hands by Claire Zara is a workshop kit produced as a discussion and information guide for students and community groups.



Author Kirsten Larwill addresses people attending the launch of 'Unemployed Australia' and 'Unemployment - It's in our Hands' at Braybrook Secondary College.

WILL YOU HELP?

You can support the Brotherhood's work by donating goods at our Brotherhood shops (listed below) or through your local green Brotherhood bin.

You may also wish to become a volunteer at your local Brotherhood shop. No experience is necessary and contact telephone numbers are listed below.

METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE

Contact: Thelma Tuxen
(03) 419 7055

Bentleigh, 518 Centre Road.
Box Hill, 937 Whitehorse Road.
Brunswick, 109 Brunswick Rd.
City, 51 Royal Arcade.
Eltham, 937B Mains Road.
Glenhuntingly,
1143 Glenhuntingly Rd.
Greensborough, Shop 6,
Main St.
Ivanhoe, 218 Upper
Heidelberg Road.
Malvern, 215 Glenferrie Road.
Mt Waverley, 11 Hamilton Walk.
Ormond, 5 Katandra Road.
Preston, 336 High Street.
Watsonia, 78 Nepean Street.

FRANKSTON & MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Contact: Helen Marinic
(03) 783 4955

Dandenong, 235 Thomas St.
Frankston, 17 Thompson St.
Mornington, 34 Main Street.
Rosebud, Shop 4,
9 Rosebud Pde.
Seaford, 2 Station Street.

GELONG & LARA

Contact shops directly

Belmont, 125 High St.
(052) 434 227
Geelong City, 175 Malop St,
(052) 298 451
Geelong East, 13A Ormond St
(052) 292 038
Geelong West,
117 Packington St,
(052) 295 494
Lara, The Centreway
(052) 821 114
Norlane, 4 Labuan Square
(052) 789 673

BALLARAT

Contact: Gladys Crittenden
2 Webster Street
Ballarat
(053) 322 128

RESIDENCES PAST THE TEST

In the last two years the Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing and Community Services has recognised the need for certain standards to be adopted by services providing residential care for older people. This is an important step forward in the right of residents to know about their facility and may assist potential residents select a suitable residence.

To this end, the Department established Standards Monitoring Teams who have now visited each hostel and nursing home across the nation, drawing up individual reports on the levels of service and quality of life for individual residents. This focus is to stimulate flexibility and diversity in work practices as they relate to each resident's specific needs. Furthermore, the reports are designed to make hostels and nursing homes in Victoria more accountable to their residents and bring standards up to a uniform quality.

The reports consider a number of issues under various headings: health care needs, social independence, freedom of choice and exercising rights, home-like environment, privacy and dignity, variety of experience and safety.

In relation to the Brotherhood, this process has taken some time and a number of the statements on individual hostels and nursing homes are now to hand. On reading the reports, it is pleasing to see that the Brotherhood has been able to demonstrate to the visiting teams its ability to generally provide a high quality of service and care to residents. The Brotherhood sees these reports as a an important complement to its Quality of Life Program which was established three years ago to enhance the rights and independence of residents.



Pat Bond (left), a resident of Flinders Lodge Nursing Home, is offered some make up tips by Nancy Farrell (Right). Flinders Lodge is one of the Brotherhood's nursing homes assessed by the Standards Monitoring Team.

THE PREVENTION OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PROJECT

The Brotherhood of St Laurence, with the support of the Queens Trust, Victorian Government, Sydney Myer Fund and other philanthropic trusts will soon begin a major action research project on the prevention of youth homelessness. The five year project will be based in Dandenong and Ballarat. The Project arises from a program proposal developed last year, with the support of the Sydney Myer Fund, by the Brotherhood's Jan Carter, James Boyce and Deborah Elkington.

This proposal linked the causes of youth homelessness with a number of inter-related social and economic changes in Australia during the past twenty five years. The crucial changes impacting on young people and associated with the emergence of youth homelessness were seen to be in the areas of income support, employment and education opportunities, housing affordability and availability, family life and opportunities for community participation. The project proposal developed a framework for how these issues could be tackled at a local level while generating research information to inform ongoing program development and policy recommendations to State and Commonwealth Governments.

The project thus aims to assist in the prevention of youth homeless being tackled simultaneously from the bottom up (local action) and the top down (government policy changes). It is anticipated that a manager will be appointed during July and will then begin work with the Dandenong and Ballarat communities to implement the project. It should be fully operational, with all staff appointed, by the end of 1992.

VALE ANNE JOHNSTONE

The Peninsula Region of the Brotherhood of St Laurence records with regret the sudden passing away of Anne Johnstone. Anne was Manager of Furniture & Collections for the Peninsula Region and joined the Brotherhood in 1978.

Anne held a number of positions during her 14 years with us and since June last year, had also been responsible for establishing and co-ordinating the Food For All Appeal in her region. In a memorial service held at Carrum Downs in April, Adrian Harris, Regional Director, spoke of Anne's commitment to the Brotherhood, dedication to her work and sense of humour.

Anne died after a short battle with cancer and is survived by her husband Alan, two children and a recently born grand-son.

BROTHERHOOD ACTION

Brotherhood Action is the quarterly journal of the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Further information about the Brotherhood and its work is available from the Information Officer on (03) 483 1384.

Articles may be reproduced freely but acknowledgement is requested. For further information, please contact Charles C. Reis, Communications Manager.

Brotherhood of St Laurence, 67 Brunswick St. Fitzroy, 3065
Telephone: (03) 419 7055 Facsimile (03) 417 2691

BIG BIN IN BALLARAT



Open and ready for business: Bishop Challen and Gladys Crittenden outside the Brotherhood's new Big Bin in Ballarat.

A new opportunity shop to support the Ballarat Employment Action Centre has been officially opened in Webster Street by the Executive Director, Bishop Challen.

Called the Big Bin, this latest Brotherhood shop sells clothing, furniture and household goods donated by the Ballarat community. Proceeds from the shop will support the Employment Action Centre's programs for Ballarat's long term jobless.

Speaking at a ceremony attended by 60 local business people and supporters, Bishop Challen said the name of the shop reflected one of the things that the Brotherhood is best known for - its big green bins.

The shop is being managed by Gladys Crittenden. Readers of Action living in Ballarat and interested in donating goods or becoming a volunteer can contact Gladys on (053) 322 128.

NEW MATERIAL AID FOR LALOR

The Brotherhood has opened a new Emergency Relief Service, this time to assist disadvantaged families living in Lalor and the surrounding area.

The new Lalor outlet, which follows the March opening of a new Material Aid service in Geelong, brings the number of relief outlets to four now being conducted by the Brotherhood.

The number of requests for assistance has increased steadily during the recession. In Lalor, which has traditionally been a self sufficient community, unemployment has grown from less than 3% in June 1987 to 12.3% according to the latest Labour Market Survey.

The new service is initially providing financial assistance and is operating out of Whittelea Family Services, located in Ruthven Street, Lalor.

NEW DIRECTOR



Former Brotherhood staff member and accomplished Policy Analyst, Alison McClelland, has joined the Brotherhood of St Laurence as its new Director of Social Policy and Research. Alison has five years previous experience with the Brotherhood as a Social Policy Analyst, Acting Director and Board Member for a time. During the following 18 months she worked as a Welfare/Policy Consultant, maintaining links with the Brotherhood in a consultative capacity. She has worked in the Office of the Victorian Director-General as Assistant Deputy Director and held the position of Policy Analyst for the National Health Strategy prior to taking up her new appointment in March.

Alison brings with her a wealth of knowledge in policy decision-making and implementation and her experience during the past decade spans a range of social reform initiatives such as the tax reform process of 1984 and 1985, the Social Security Review and the National Health Strategy. She has been a member of several state and federal advisory committees and is currently Principal Policy Co-ordinator on economic issues for the Australian Council of Social Service, and is also a member of the Phillip Institute of Technology MA (Social Policy) Course Advisory Committee.

In Alison's view, social policy and research, at the Brotherhood of St Laurence, has a proud record in terms of its positive contribution to social reform in Australia. She is keen to build and continue with that record.

She believes that the Brotherhood's strength lies in a unique combination of a number of factors. These factors include an historic and on-going concern with the promotion of social justice; sound experience in the delivery of services to provide practical help to disadvantaged people, especially innovative services; research into the reasons for poverty and inequality; and social action to achieve positive change.

Alison's highest priority for research and policy in the coming years will be work relating to unemployment. She considers this to be the main economic and social problem facing Australia and the principal reason for the present unacceptably high level of poverty.

The Brotherhood's work in relation to unemployment should enable it to recommend policies to promote job growth, to assist long term and disadvantaged job seekers obtain jobs as they become available, and to ensure that people who are unemployed and jobless are able to have a decent minimum standard of living.

URGENT APPEALS TO ASSIST PEOPLE IN NEED

In the face of extra-ordinary demand for material relief, the Brotherhood has launched two appeals to support its Material Aid services.

The annual May Appeal is seeking financial support to assist the Brotherhood in continuing material assistance to the hardest hit areas during the recession: Fitzroy and the inner Melbourne area; Frankston, the Mornington Peninsula and Westernport regions; Geelong and surrounding environs; and Lalor, Craigieburn and Ballarat.

And with the onset of winter, The Blanket Appeal is asking for donations of good quality blankets and warm clothing, which can be given away to parents with young children, individuals in need, and homeless young people.

Bishop Michael Challen said that in areas such as Geelong, twenty new families every day were seeking the Brotherhood's help. In Fitzroy, over 1,000 requests for assistance were being handled each month.

"We are in the midst of great crisis in our community. We are told the economy is improving, albeit slowly, but the reality is that the suffering is still with us and showing no signs of abating in the foreseeable future.

"Our Material Aid services are the front line of the Brotherhood's work to improve the circumstances of the most disadvantaged. Some who seek our help are unable to afford adequate heating for their homes. Others arrive with their children, escaping domestic violence with only the clothes on their back. We are endeavouring to provide appropriate and immediate relief, where and when it is needed," he said.

Readers of Action can support the May Appeal by sending a donation by cheque or money order to the Brotherhood of St Laurence May Appeal, Locked Bag 520, Collingwood 3066.

Donations of blankets and warm clothing can be left at any Brotherhood Bin or delivered directly to a Material Aid service at 97 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy; 6 Rosella Street, Frankston; or 96 Fyans Street, Geelong.



These shoes were made for walking: Mrs Massalkhi at the Fitzroy Material Aid Service fitting a pair of shoes to one of her 6 children.

FACTS FROM OUR PAST



Did you know that the Brotherhood of St Laurence introduced the milk program, which became an integral part of Victorian primary school life for most of the post war period? The free milk program began at Fitzroy's George St Primary School in 1947 with the help of local businessmen. To provide some indication of the health of children at that time, the headmaster used to treat 20 children every morning for infected fingers and toes, conjunctivitis and head lice. Free milk was later adopted state-wide by the Victorian Education Department and continued to be part of every primary school's daily routine until the 1970s.



MOTHERS DAY MEMENTO

Pictured here is Brotherhood staff member, Colin Golding, bringing some Mothers' Day cheer to Brunswick St Fitzroy. The flowers were given away by the Brotherhood to symbolise that women on low incomes raising families take responsibility for motherhood, often in the face of great adversity. Approximately 500 flowers were given away with the help of staff and trainees from the Employment Action Centre.

FURNITURE DONATIONS

You can assist the Brotherhood by donating your spare, good quality furniture.

We will either give these donations to families in need through our material aid centres or we will sell extra items to gain funds for our welfare programmes. The Brotherhood will arrange collection of your furniture from your home by appointment (contact phone number listed below), or you may deliver your donations to the following depots:

MELBOURNE

132 Barkley Street Brunswick
Hrs: Mon-Fri 9.30am-5.30pm
Sat 9.30am to 3.00pm
Telephone: (03) 387 4744

FRANKSTON & MORNINGTON PENINSULA

30 Kookaburra St Frankston
Hrs: Mon-Fri 9.00-5.00pm
Telephone: (03) 783 4955

GEELONG

96 Fyans St Geelong South
Hrs: Mon-Fri 9.00am-5.00pm
Telephone: (052) 29 5494

BALLARAT

2 Webster Street, Ballarat
Telephone: (053) 322 128

ACCESS TO CHILD HEALTH RESTRICTED

A new report by the Brotherhood shows that low income families, particularly immigrants, have unequal access to health services for children. The study, "Access to Health Care for Children in Low Income Families" by Principal Research Officer, Janet Taylor, focussed on families living in Fitzroy, Hastings and Craigieburn. The study found that financial considerations, including the cost of medication, health services and transport, were a significant barrier to obtaining appropriate health care for children in some low income families.

While most families in the study experienced some kind of difficulty, those who were recent immigrants were additionally disadvantaged by language and cultural barriers.

Low income families living in outlying areas have difficulties in obtaining health services. As one mother commented: "Without a car, when your kids are sick, it's either a bus or a taxi and if you haven't got the money you're pushing kids down in either rain or boiling hot weather. I wore myself out walking back and forward."

The study noted that even the introduction of small payments for health services (for example the introduction in 1990 of payments of \$2.50 for pharmaceuticals which were formally free for pensioners; the proposed Medicare co-payment) has had considerable impact on low income families, who must limit the use of necessary services for their children.