



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Bishops Commission for Social Justice – Mission and Service

May 3, 2019

Appointment of Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Social Services Australia

Dear friends,

The Bishops Commission for Social Justice – Service and Mission and the Board of Catholic Social Services Australia have completed their search for a new Chief Executive Officer. I am pleased to announce that Ursula Stephens will serve in that role, commencing on July 1.

Dr Stephens is probably best known for having spent 12 years in the Australian Parliament as a Senator for New South Wales from 2002 to 2014, representing the Australian Labor Party.

She was Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Inclusion in the first Rudd Government. She was also Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector. She led the consultation and development of the social inclusion narrative across a range of portfolios, with sector organisations, businesses and the philanthropic sector. She has a strong record of advocacy on behalf of her constituents.

Dr Stephens also has extensive experience and a deep understanding of the social services sector, social policy development, government relations and community services more broadly. Her background includes civil duties, adult and community education, small business, community and regional development, public policy and administration. She holds a PhD in Public Administration and a Bachelor of Education.

Dr Stephens is also an active member of her local parish community, serving on the finance council.

Dr Stephens' role with Catholic Social Services Australia will see her speaking on behalf of vulnerable and marginalised people, as well as the hundreds of Catholic social service sites across the country that support them.

On behalf of the Bishops Commission for Social Justice – Mission and Service and my brother Bishops, I welcome Dr Stephens and wish her well as she undertakes this critical work.

I also wish to acknowledge the fine work that Fr Frank Brennan SJ has done as CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia for almost three years. Fr Frank has been an advocate for marginalised and vulnerable people for decades and while he will take his considerable gifts to a new challenge, we know he will continue to use his profile to speak on behalf of those without a voice.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv
Chair, Bishops Commission for Social Justice – Mission and Service