



*Summary of*  
**NATIONAL COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS**  
**FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT**  
**DECEMBER 2024**

## **SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS – DECEMBER 2024**

The December meeting via Teams marked the last one for National Council for 2024. I personally am incredibly grateful for the collaborative and supportive culture within the National Council and the Society more broadly, that helps us continue to deliver our diverse good works.

**Below is a summary of key matters discussed during our Meeting held on 7 December 2024.**

### **UPDATE ON SSVP OCEANIA PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

The St Vincent de Paul Society around the world has a long and proud history of creating a 'global network of charity', with a focus on offering a 'hand-up' to all people in need.

The National Council Presidents and Treasurers from New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Australia, the ITVP-Oceania Zone, two Zone Coordinators and the Zone / CGI Twinning Officer and Chair of Australia's Overseas Partnership Program met in Canberra on 15-18 November 2024. Unfortunately, due to conflicts, I was unable to attend but was ably represented by the International Territorial Vice President, Frank Brassil and the National Council Chief Executive Officer, Toby oConnor.

The purpose of the Forum was "to support the development of sustainable Societies in the Oceania Zone through the strengthening of National Councils".

A small number of networking groups (e.g. National Treasurers) will be established and drawn from participating National Councils which will assist with implementing any activities and initiatives considered beneficial to advancing the sustainability of a National Council across the region in the future.

### **UPDATE ON REVIEW OF *The Rule Part III***

There was an enormous amount of material provided by State and Territory Councils in response to the proposed 2nd amendments.

*The Rule* Review Drafting Group met in Canberra on 2-4 December and over two and half very full days, reviewed all feedback, deliberated, explored wording and proposed the third amendments to Part III.

It is proposed to provide State and Territory Councils and their CEOs a summary of the main proposed changes to the second amendments prior to the third amendments being finalised.

The final third amendments will be available to National Council for consideration at its 22-23 February 2025 meeting. The amendments will then be forwarded to State and Territory Councils with a goal of forwarding through to the CGI governance review committee as quickly as possible.

### **THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS OF CONGRESS 23+ PROJECTS**

Just prior to the December meeting I sent out letters to Society staff participating in Congress Projects, Congress Project Champions, and all active Congress Project Team members, thanking them for their ongoing commitment to progressing the Congress Projects and I once again wish to thank all that participated, and continue to participate, for promoting the Vincentian mission and for the enthusiasm they brought to all of their activities with the Society.

The Congress Project Teams are at various stages of delivery, and it is my expectation that several will complete their work this year. A number of Project Teams will continue their work in 2025, and one or two will continue into 2026.

The Congress Project Teams have strived to add value to the Society through the development of new, complementary resources and tools to support the good works that Conferences and all Members of the Society perform. National Council is grateful for the enormous enthusiasm that the Leaders of each Congress Project have brought to each initiative and for their consultative efforts with Members and employees.

There are many pieces of work to mention, with initiatives ranging from the development of a national recruitment campaign; to the building blocks of a mentoring program; to the development of business requirements for new digital communication tools.

For details on each Project including the progress being made, I refer you to <https://vinnies.link/Congress-Delegates>. A forum is being scheduled for May 2025 for any Member to attend via an online link, to hear more about each Project...

### **UPDATE ON *The Vincentian Way***

The drafting group has done an excellent job in articulating what it means for the Society to be a Catholic lay association in the document *The Vincentian Way*. National Council has asked the drafting group to come together in Sydney in mid-December for the purpose of exploring how the concepts contained in the document can be brought to life through a curriculum that will have a wider audience within the Society. The group consists of a State and a Territory CEO and Learning and development specialists, sourced from SVdP-NSW, to commence developing the domains to pair with *The Vincentian Way*.

In the coming 2-3 months National Council is keen to share *The Vincentian Way* with members of State and Territory Councils who, together with National Council, are the Stewards of the Society in Australia. Society CEOs and executive leadership teams will be invited to participate in these discussions.

### **UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING MATTERS**

Safeguarding continues to be on the forefront of mind for the National Council. We are progressing with compliance of over 50% for 8 of the 10 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (80%). National Council is committed to increasing to 100% compliance across all standards, self-assessment requirements and in the areas of leadership and engagement as quickly as possible recognising that jurisdictions are at various levels of development in implementing the safeguarding.

Members of all the Societies body corporate and their respective executive leadership teams will participate on five online safeguarding training modules by mid-2025. Two of the five modules prepared by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd were repurposed by National Council in collaboration with ACSL to accommodate the Society's environment.

### **SPIRIT OF YOUTH**

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival will now conclude the Church's celebration of the international Jubilee Year in December 2025. The Festival is being convened in Melbourne with support from the Melbourne Archdiocese. The Spirit of Youth (SoY) team have established a working group to help coordinate our presence as part of the Social Justice Activity Centre that is part of the Festival Program.

Nationally, it is expected that the SoY working group will coordinate the "stall" or encounter experience as part of our engagement with the Social Justice Activity Centre. There is also a recommendation from SoY that we organise a gathering of all young people connected with the Society as part of the Festival Program.

### **FEDERAL ELECTION MATTERS**

National Council agreed that the Society should run with a shortened version of the federal advocacy suite in the lead up to the election, with four key asks covering the safety net, housing and homelessness, refugees and First Nations peoples and with titles reviewed.

The amount of work that has gone into developing the Society's federal advocacy materials is immeasurable and on behalf of the National Council I thank the National Council Secretariate for their work to date.

The updated [Let's Build a Fairer Australia!](#) suite will therefore remain on the website for those who require more information, particularly in other advocacy areas such as gambling reform and taxation and welfare reform.

