

# Jesuit Social

March 2006 

*Standing in solidarity with those in need, expressing a faith that promotes justice*

# Services

Easter Newsletter

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Julie Edwards, CEO

**W**e are now well into 2006 and life seems to be going fast! This year, 2006, is a Jubilee year for the wider Jesuit community internationally.

Traditionally, a Jubilee year is about liberation, about setting things right and having a fresh start. It's understood that our individual, personal liberation is intrinsically tied up with the liberation of the other and with the world beyond us.

In this Jubilee year, we celebrate the lives of Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier and Peter Faber – the first companions who formed the Jesuit order. It's 500 years since Xavier and Faber were born and 450 years since Ignatius died. That's a long time! Yet their initial vision continues to inspire so many people across the world.

So what might we learn from these three people that might guide us to our own fresh start? To the liberation of ourselves and others?

For me, what stands out about them is their capacity to engage in deep conversations – with each other, with their God and ultimately with countless others.

At Jesuit Social Services, we continue this tradition by being in relationship with people – by truly listening and connecting with them.

Our mission captures this: 'standing in solidarity with those in need; expressing a faith that promotes justice'.

I am keen this year for us to strengthen our commitment to being in relationship with others – to forming community partners in our shared vision.

This vision is for an Australia as a place where people can access opportunities and feel they have a contribution to make. This is the gospel way. If it goes the other way, we risk the rise of an underclass – and the problems associated with marginalised, angry, desperate people.

So during 2006 a priority for us at Jesuit Social Services is to keep up an open dialogue with our stakeholders and the broader community about what kind of world we want to live in. In this way, disadvantage stops being 'out there', and we're several steps closer to building a society that is inclusive, respectful, compassionate and just.

In this Jubilee year, let's focus on having deep conversations that explore our shared human journey, reminding ourselves that our liberation is intrinsically tied up with the liberation of others.

This newsletter highlights some of the ways that this is already happening – through our staff, volunteers and donors – and also suggests some new ways to be partners with us in our work. Best wishes for a safe and happy Easter and I hope to see many of you at the Jesuit Social Services Annual Dinner on May 20th!

Julie Edwards, CEO

## OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL – EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO EQUITY

**O**n the tenth anniversary of the Howard Coalition Government, it is worth reflecting upon the chief challenges we face as a nation.

Over the last decade, as Australia has become increasingly enmeshed with the global economy, policy makers and opinion leaders have grappled with the question of what role Government is to play. Is it to divide our economic wealth into equitable slices or bake a bigger cake? Can it do both without neglecting one or the other?

Equity and opportunity make great partners, but are insufficient on their own. It takes great commitment on the part of Government to provide both economic opportunities and services in an era when the market is increasingly relied upon to do both.

Unfortunately the importance of these twin goals has fallen further from public view. The notion of a 'better society', towards which Jesuit Social Services strives, has increasingly come to be seen by many as a mere sidetrack on the road to riches.

Education is the key to success in today's hyper-competitive environment. A person's vocational skills at age 25 are a fair determinant of their life outcome. Thus, investing in the skills of the vulnerable and disenfranchised is an important function of Jesuit Social Services. Through our Gateway program, we have consistently worked with young individuals who face multiple barriers to their movement from 'welfare to work.'

These young people are, in the main, those that have been put in the 'too hard basket' by policy

makers. Too often, they have been left to languish in 'Work for the Dole' schemes, where they don't have access to real education and training.

Poverty is not a line or an index, it's about the lives people live every day; for some people stuck in it, poverty is a life sentence.

Jesuit Social Services believes that everyone should have an opportunity to 'make it' in Australia. Just because people have suffered from a poor education, a personal or family crisis or even some unfortunate life decisions, this should not mean they have to live their life on the margins.

While Australia has had a higher rate of economic growth than any other OECD nation over the last decade, only Poland and the Czech Republic spent less, as proportion of GDP, on training their unemployed than Australia. Yet we still find time for criticising the less fortunate for being 'job shy.'

Emphasising individual responsibility is not of itself problematic. However, it is important to also realise that policies that increase individual responsibility without simultaneously improving individual capacity, fail to redress the real labour market barriers faced by disadvantaged jobseekers.

Jesuit Social Services understands that a society is only as good as how it treats its most vulnerable members. As Australia forges into the 21st century, it is important not only to highlight the triumphs of our best and brightest, but also to spare a thought for how those less fortunate are faring.

Tim Martyn  
Policy and Research Officer,  
Jesuit Social Services

## CELEBRATE EASTER WITH ABBOTSFORD BISCUITS & CHOCOLATE EGGS

**A**bbotsford Biscuits, a brand from our Gateway Kitchen, is pleased to be offering a range of delicious handmade boxed biscuits and wrapped chocolate eggs for Easter. See page 2 for details.



## INSIDE

**Mapping the City** – Participants in our Arts and Culture program colour the city

**Abbotsford Biscuits are open for business** – We celebrate the launch of the Gateway Kitchen

**The other side of the law** – Former magistrate Colin Macleod turned Brosnan Centre volunteer is teaching program participants to drive

**Messing about on the water** – Albert Park Yacht Club Sail-A-Thon

**In Profile** – Youth worker Zahra Saleh

**Kicking Goals** – Living in Harmony Soccer Tournament

**Become a Community Partner** – Your opportunity to work in partnership with Jesuit Social Services

**2006 Annual Fundraising Dinner** – Guest speaker, Professor Dorothy Scott

# GATEWAY KITCHEN OPENS FOR BUSINESS



The Gateway Kitchen was launched on the 30th November 2005 by Richard Wynne MP, Member for Richmond. The program offers Gateway participants training in hospitality skills.

The development of a social enterprise posed new challenges for us and we were all keen to see how it would evolve. Well evolve it has!

The focus in the kitchen is learning the art and science of baking biscuits for our registered brand **Abbotsford Biscuits**. Thanks to media exposure in The Age "Epicure" and Melbourne Times, **Abbotsford Biscuits** went into steady production, producing over 2,000 boxes of biscuits for Christmas.

This incredible response took us by surprise! Overwhelming support from volunteers who worked alongside Gateway participants enabled us to complete every last order. Thank you to our customers for your support and patience over the busy Christmas period. As with any new enterprise, there were a few teething problems but these have all been ironed out and we're ready for our Easter production!

We have a selection of delicious hand made boxed biscuits and wrapped chocolate eggs for sale. View our range by logging onto [www.jss.org.au](http://www.jss.org.au) then place your order by filling out the order form or phoning 9429 0267 or 9429 0291. As our biscuits and eggs are too fragile to post, goods can be delivered to you via courier or collected from 563 Victoria Street Abbotsford, where the kitchen is located.

*Richard Wynne MP, Member for Richmond in the Gateway Kitchen with Co-ordinator, Loretta Sartori (centre) and CEO, Julie Edwards (right).*

## MAPPING THE CITY

In 1997 Jesuit Social Services established the Artful Dodgers Studio in Collingwood. As part of the Gateway program, the art and music studios continue to support young program participants along a pathway to education, training and employment.

The Studio's major project for 2005, **Mapping the City**, was developed in collaboration with participants and studio artists. Young people were invited to explore their relationships with Melbourne and their experiences of living and working in the city. The art pieces and music that grew from this work were displayed in the St. Kilda Road underpass.

**Mapping the City** took this inhospitable walkway in the cultural heart of Melbourne and transformed it into a vibrant and telling site of young art.

Incidents, events and places of significance were depicted through painting, drawing, digital media, photography, poetry, prose, graffiti, stencil art, performance, music and soundscapes. MP3 players were bolted to the walls of the space and visitors were invited to bring their own earphones and plug in to experience the songs and sounds that expressed the ideas of Melbourne for our young artists.

Over 1000 people viewed the **Mapping the City** exhibition during its three weeks on display, expressing delight in the transformation of a cold and uninviting space into a colourful, warm and vibrant display of creativity.

**Mapping the City** will culminate with the launch of a book and DVD which track and celebrate the charting of this living map of Melbourne, based on the experiences of young adults who live and play here but whose voices are rarely heard.

The launch will be on Thursday, March 30th at Trades Hall, Victoria St., Carlton.



A section of artwork from the Mapping the City project displayed in the St Kilda Road underpass.

## MESSING ABOUT ON THE WATER



It was a great day for sailing on Sunday March 5th. Jesuit Social Services program participants took to the water in Albert Park Yacht Club's Sail-A-Thon and had a ball. Many thanks to Albert Park Yacht Club.



Youth Worker Zahra Saleh

## IN PROFILE: JESUIT SOCIAL SERVICES YOUTH WORKER ZAHRA SALEH

“**W**hen I came here from Eritrea 13 years ago, things were different for young African people arriving in Australia. There wasn't as much support available as there is now or if there was we didn't know about it. There are many things to overcome when you first arrive in a new country, language barriers, new subjects at school, cultural differences. It's easy to feel isolated.”

Zahra completed high school and university in Australia and believes in the value of education as a way to give young people opportunities and help them overcome obstacles in life. Today in her work as Refugee Youth Worker with Jesuit Social Services Horn of Africa Youth Program, Zahra facilitates a homework support group in Flemington for African primary and secondary students.

“**There are many things to overcome when you first arrive in a new country.**”

“Whatever I do, I love,” Zahra says flashing her beaming smile, “but what makes me really happy is helping the young people in the homework group to do their school work and seeing them satisfied with what they've done.” The homework group, which sees up to 30 young people attend each night, relies on the support of volunteers from the community to assist.

“We've had really positive feedback from parents and from the schools saying the kids who come to homework group are happier and doing well with their school work. That inspires me to want to keep doing this work. I became a youth worker because from what I had seen and experienced as a young African woman new to Australia, I felt I could guide the young people who are arriving now.”

Zahra also works with young African women involving them in sports such as swimming and basketball. “The girls love these sports. They've asked if they can start a soccer team as well! We'll see – there is so much we can do.”

## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW: FORMER MAGISTRATE COLIN MACLEOD VOLUNTEERS

**V**olunteers make an enormous contribution to our work with young offenders at the Brosnan Centre. Colin Macleod is one such volunteer. A retired judge, Colin assists young people at the Brosnan Centre to obtain a learner's permit and a driver's licence. This is a significant step for many who have never had this opportunity. The attainment of a driver's licence increases self-confidence and self-esteem plus provides options for employment.

Colin was a Magistrate for 11 years and prior to this was Deputy President, Judge of the Accident Compensation Tribunal from 1988 to 1992.

Colin brings with him a wealth of legal experience and a keenness to increase liaison between the Brosnan Centre and Magistrate Courts. So far he has set up meetings between Brosnan Centre staff and magistrates of Sunshine, Broadmeadows and Heidelberg courts. Further visits are planned for 2006.



Colin's main interest at the Brosnan Centre is the young people themselves. He firmly believes that the attainment of a driver's licence is a significant step in the right direction. Colin's ability to relate informally to the Brosnan Centre young people is great to see – and fulfils the basic aim of his involvement. “As a Magistrate, I was responsible for sentencing a number of young people – now it's time to work with them in a positive way”.

Volunteer Colin Macleod

## DONOR STORY: A FATHER INSPIRED TO CONTRIBUTE

**W**hen my son found himself in trouble with the police, he was lucky enough to be pointed in the direction of the Brosnan Centre. The staff there really helped him get back on track. His life is different now, he has his own flat and is doing well and even though he is no longer part of the program at Brosnan, a staff member still makes the effort to check in with him from time to time. He's not just another client to them, he's a person. As a father that means a lot to me. What I admire about Jesuit Social Services is their tenacity. Once they are dealing with someone they don't let go and that's why I'll always support them.

## KICKING GOALS



Photo courtesy of Dave Tacon

Young men, refugees from many different African nations, kicking goals in the Jesuit Social Services Living in Harmony Soccer Tournament in March.

