

# Jesuit Social Services

## Easter 2004

## Services

### Autumn Newsletter



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

# MEMORIAL TO FATHER JOHN BROSNAN



*Premier Bracks unveils the Brosnan memorial with Mary Wilshire, Father Brosnan's sister.*

**T**he Brosnan Centre is very much a memorial to Father Brosnan and his extraordinary contribution to the Victorian community through his life and especially his ministry to those imprisoned.

But on the first anniversary of his death, 26th March 2004, the Victorian Premier unveiled what will be a lasting memorial to this great man, on the doorstep of the centre that bears his name.

Outside the Brosnan Centre in Dawson Street, Brunswick, a busy, inner city, working class suburb of Melbourne, now stands a full figure bronze statue of Father Brosnan, with hand outstretched in welcome to those



*Brosnan Centre Patron, Garry Lyon, with Brosnan Centre founder, Father Peter Norden, S.J., embracing the Fr Brosnan memorial.*

entering and with a characteristically warm, open-mouthed, smile!

“There are three things needed by people upon their release from prison”, Father Brosnan often said, “a place to live that is decent, a job that they can handle and friendship, and the hardest to provide is friendship”.

Victorian Premier Steve Bracks was joined by members of Father Brosnan's family, including his sister, Mary Wilshire, as the memorial was unveiled. Father Brosnan's brother, Jim, died in 1980, but there were a good number of his nephews and nieces present.

Brosnan Centre Manager, Peter Coghlan, believes this memorial will be a great addition to the centre: “The figure of Father Bros right outside our entrance will be a wonderful reminder to all the young people coming to the centre in future decades”.

“Many of the young people whom we help have lacked a good mentor in their lives and while our youth workers and social workers have always filled that role in the last twenty-seven years, Father Brosnan's figure will remind us of our original inspiration” he explained.

Premier Bracks was joined by Corrections Minister, Andre Haermeyer, and the support of the Department for Victorian Communities was acknowledged in helping to defray the costs of artist, Peter Corlett.

A number of other private donors contributed towards the cost of the bronze memorial.

Jesuit Social Services Executive Director, Bernie Geary, said he hoped that this new memorial will not only remind the young people of Father Brosnan's work as Pentridge Prison chaplain over thirty years, but will also remind the Australian community of the great legacy left by this generous and compassionate and urbane man.

“We hope that the community will increase their understanding of the difficult work that *The Brosnan Centre* undertakes and their willingness to support the ongoing costs of the operation in the coming years”, he said.

*The Father Brosnan Appeal Fund* is seeking community support, to ensure that the centre continues to assist young people in special need and that the legacy of Father Brosnan lives on into the future. Donations to the Appeal Fund are tax deductible.



*Executive Director, Bernie Geary, with Premier, Steve Bracks, admiring the welcoming smile of Father Brosnan at the entrance to the Brosnan Centre.*



*Seven Managers of the Brosnan Centre with the Fr Brosnan memorial (from left to right): Tony Hayes (1999-2001), Mark Griffiths (1983-1988), David Murray (1979-1983), Paul Newland (1993-1998), Bernie Geary (1988-1992), Fr Peter Norden (1977-1978), Peter Coghlan (2001-present).*

View the tribute to Father Brosnan on the Jesuit Social Services web site: <http://www.jss.org.au/programmes/brosnan.html>

# RESEARCH REPORT ON POVERTY IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA

The policy and research office of Jesuit Social Services, The Ignatius Centre, has just produced some ground-breaking research on the distribution of social disadvantage across New South Wales and Victoria.

The new report, *Community Adversity and Resilience*, is the sequel to an earlier report also by Professor Tony Vinson: *Unequal In Life* (1999).

Both reports mapped poverty and disadvantage using multiple measures, according to local postcode areas to identify local communities or neighborhoods.

The report has met with unprecedented public interest and was well reported on the front page of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the

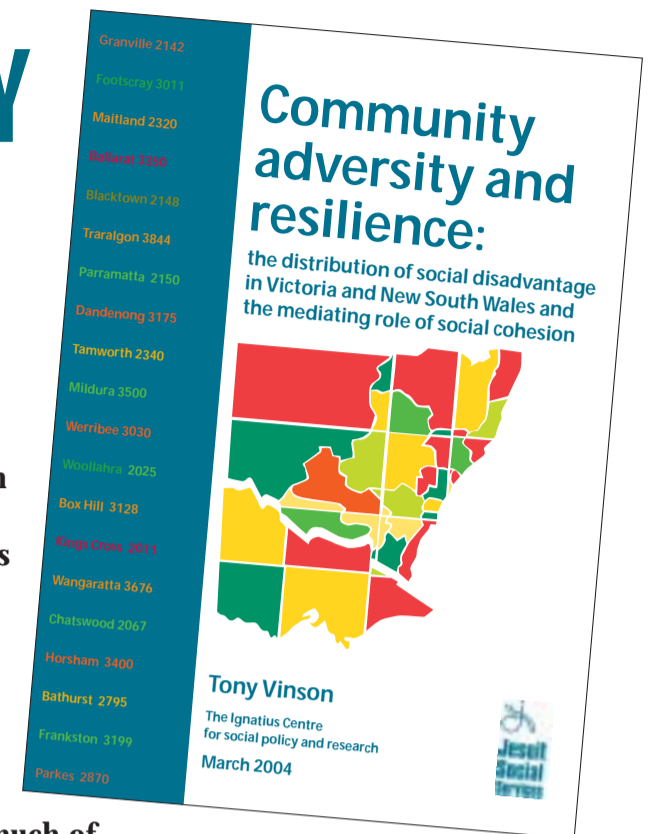
*Melbourne Age* newspaper on the day of its release. More than 90 further media outlets reported on our findings in the first three days, and our web page had 45,000 hits on the first day, March 12.

Policy Director, Father Peter Norden, accompanied by Professor Vinson, spent much of February in pre-release consultations with Federal Government Ministers, Federal Shadow Ministers, and senior officers of both the New South Wales and Victorian State Governments.

The New South Wales Premier's Department and the Department for Victorian Communities in Melbourne both sponsored the Jesuit Social Services research project, as an aid to their future strategic planning.

The latest report incorporated a new measure of community social cohesion and the findings point to an important new perspective for government authorities. Areas of high social cohesion were seen to modify some of the harmful impacts of social disadvantage, and this trend was found to be significant according to several different measures of social disadvantage.

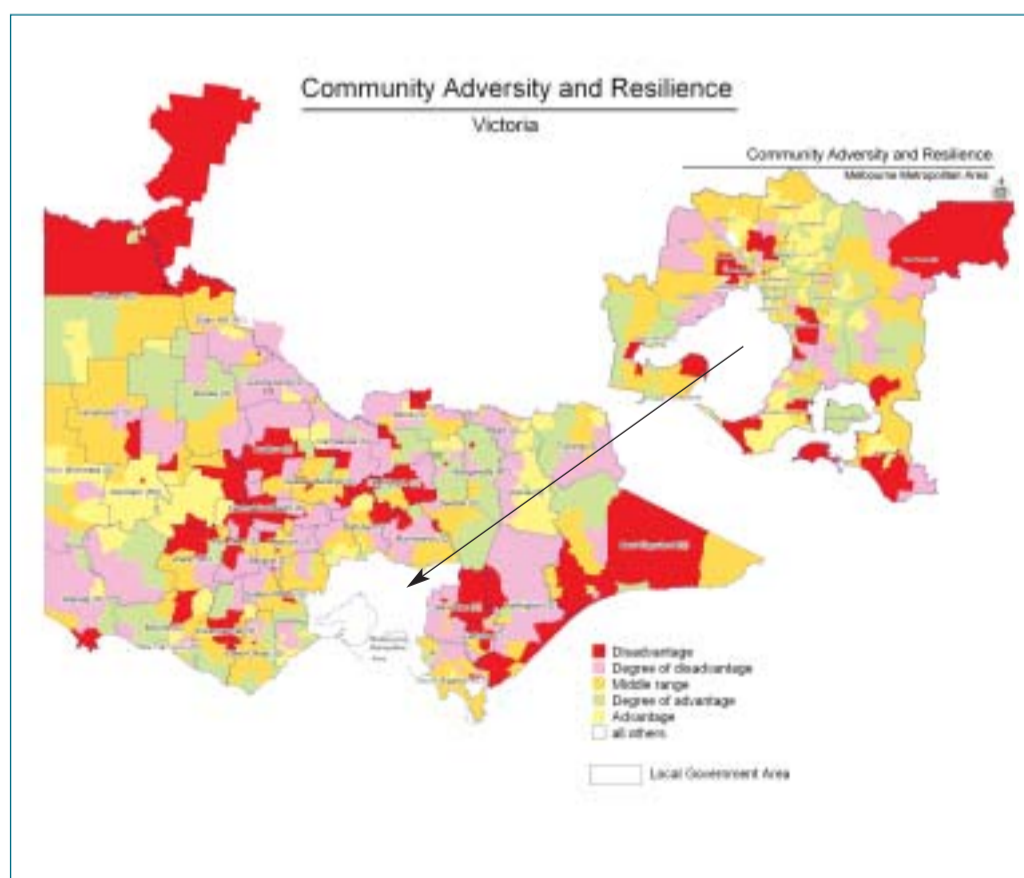
The implications of these findings are quite clear, according to Jesuit Social Services Policy Director, Father Peter Norden: "Before initiating new community intervention programs, especially ones that might involve large amounts of government resources, the fostering of community engagement and community development programs will ensure a far more effective outcome", he explained.



Emeritus Professor Tony Vinson at the Jesuit Social Services policy and research office, The Ignatius Centre.

## DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE

### Victoria, Melbourne



### New South Wales, Sydney

