



# Change tomorrow

Your support today. A better tomorrow.



Beza appreciates the flowers outside North Melbourne Community Centre, where she is now a HIPPY tutor after graduating the program.

## Celebrating 100 editions: a legacy of connection

For more than 50 years, our newsletter has been a bridge between BSL and our supporters. From Brotherhood Action in 1969, to Building Better Lives Together, and now Change Tomorrow, this publication has evolved alongside our purpose.

We've always been committed to having a direct line with our supporters and this 100th edition is more than just a milestone. It's a reminder that lasting change takes time, persistence, and partnership. Thank you for being part of this journey.



### Did you know?

The very first edition of Brotherhood Action in 1969 featured stories on housing and employment — issues that remain central to our work today.

# A message from Jane, BSL's new Board Chair

I'm honoured to introduce myself as the new Chair of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) Board. This role is deeply meaningful to me – not only because of BSL's extraordinary impact over 95 years, but because my connection to this organisation began as a child when my mother volunteered here. That early experience shaped my belief that every person deserves opportunity and dignity, and it's why I'm passionate about BSL's purpose today.

Poverty is not inevitable. It's something we can change – and must change – together. BSL's Strategy 2030 sets a bold vision for an Australia free of poverty, and I'm excited to work with our Board, Trav and the team, and with you – our supporters and partners – to bring our ambition to life. Through policy reform, strong community partnerships, and services that transform lives, we can create lasting impact.

Your support is the foundation for everything we do. I look forward to meeting and working with each of you as we continue building a fairer Australia – together, we can change tomorrow.

In hope and kindness,



**Jane Hodder**

Board Chair

Brotherhood of St. Laurence

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## Perceptions of poverty – why measurement matters



Poverty shows up in obvious ways – kids missing out at school, families stuck in poor housing, people delaying going to the doctor. But it also hides in isolation and quiet stress. Whether seen or unseen, poverty chips away at education, health, housing, and social connection – and that's a cost Australia can't afford to ignore.

Australians agree government should act on poverty. Yet Australia remains an international outlier: 156 countries have official poverty measures. We have none.

BSL, with others, is calling for dual poverty measures – monetary and multidimensional – to understand overlapping disadvantages and guide smarter action. This commitment would give us the opportunity to work together

across government, community, academia, and lived experience to move the dial on poverty.

### Why does this matter?

Countries like Canada and New Zealand have official poverty measures – and both have made some progress in reducing poverty. Australia can do the same.

Take this as your open invitation to join us in addressing poverty. Let's make 2026 the turning point – when Australia decided not just to talk about poverty, but to measure it, and act on it.

## How you can be involved

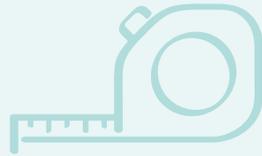
In 2025, we spoke with government about the positive potential of dual poverty measures and demonstrated what a Multidimensional Poverty Index for Australia could look like and how it can be used to reduce poverty in Australia, with lived experience advocates backing us in. But we want to do more.

Made possible by your support, we're launching a national report which reveals that Australians see poverty and inequality as urgent issues — and believe action is needed. Introducing official poverty measures could be a game-changer, guiding smarter solutions that help us track real progress toward a fairer Australia.

**Sign up to receive your copy and amplify this important research at**  
[bsl.org.au/povertyperceptions](https://bsl.org.au/povertyperceptions)

### Tamara's story:

## Why we measure poverty



Tamara Rhodes knows the reality behind the statistics. "Sometimes I have to choose between paying rent or doing a full grocery shop," she says. "If a family member is sick, it's a struggle to find a GP that bulk bills."

After joining a BSL program in regional Victoria, Tamara gained confidence and became an advocate for official poverty measures. Last year, she shared her lived experience at Parliament House in Canberra — her first visit to the nation's capital — speaking directly to decision-makers, including the Federal Social Services Minister.

Her message is clear: when policy reflects real lives, solutions make a greater impact.

Despite ongoing challenges, Tamara is determined to break the cycle of disadvantage for her two daughters. "Feeling like you're failing your children — it's gut-wrenching," she says. Her advocacy is helping Australia understand why official poverty measures matter and how they can change lives.



Tamara Rhodes interviews with ABC journalist Dan Ziffer to advocate for official poverty measures.

### Tamara's hope for the future:

**“I don't want others to feel the stigma, isolation, and shame that I do. We're essentially a wealthy country compared to some, and some of our residents are doing it really tough.”**

Tamara is determined to break the cycle of disadvantage for her two daughters.

## Ren's story:

# A dream come true

When David Scott School student Ren learned her school would contribute garments to Melbourne Fashion Week's 2025 Closing Runway, she could hardly believe it. "I have loved fashion since I was a little girl. I honestly felt my dreams had come true."

Over months, students collaborated with BSL op shop teams to design and craft looks from donated materials, reimagining corporate wear for a sustainability-focused showcase at 101 Collins Street in October.

Ren's journey didn't end at Fashion Week: she toured a national TV newsroom and was interviewed about the project, describing the surreal experience of sitting under studio

## Teacher's perspective:

**66** It was an incredible learning opportunity for all of them and a real taste of the work that goes into these sorts of events. **99**

— Georgina Shugg, David Scott School

lights and feeling unexpectedly at ease. Inspired by the project, Ren plans to pursue studies and a career in fashion.



BSL staff, David Scott School teachers and students posing for the camera in front of Melbourne Fashion Week banner.

Over months, students collaborated with BSL op shop teams to design and craft looks from donated materials.



Beza standing outside North Melbourne Community Centre, where her new workplace, HIPPY North Melbourne, operates.

### Beza's story:

## From saving for a house to crisis housing – while pregnant



Pregnant with her son Yeabsira, Beza feared she would be homeless when she gave birth. Her relationship had ended; her health required ongoing treatment; she'd had to stop work as a nurse. "If you said 'Hi, how are you?' I would probably break into tears," she recalls.

The stress was overwhelming. A conversation with her midwife connected Beza to a social worker, and then to the housing support she needed.

After a period in crisis and transitional accommodation, Beza and Yeabsira, who graduated from BSL's North Melbourne HIPPY (Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters) in November, moved into a secure apartment. "I am lucky from that perspective – I know people who have been waiting ten years," she says. "To maintain your health, you need a secure place to call home."

Today, with Yeabsira about to start school, Beza is back working three days a week, now as a HIPPY tutor, and rebuilding the future she imagined.

### Beza's reflection:

**66** In my mind, I would have owned a house by now and my child would be running around in the backyard – that was my dream. But dreams don't always come true. Life gets in the way – but we keep moving. **99**

## Obeda's story:

# A sliding doors moment that led to a job that cares



When Obeda moved from New Zealand to Victoria, uncertainty followed. With limited experience and no licenses, he was told construction might be his only option. His mother-in-law suggested visiting BSL's Thrive Hub – and everything changed. "I came in with no sense of direction," he says. "Then we come here and there's so much opportunity. Sitting down with the team unlocked something within me – confidence, motivation, hunger."

With tailored guidance, interview preparation, and training, Obeda explored pathways and discovered his true passion: helping people. Within a month, he secured a role in a hospital environment in Frankston, gaining first aid and portering skills and momentum toward nursing. "Helping people is what I truly want to

do," he says. The Thrive Hub gave him belief and a plan, turning uncertainty into a career with purpose. Today, he feels proud supporting elderly patients and young children – and optimistic about the future for his family. One conversation opened the door; commitment carried him through.

### Obeda's advice:

**66 There's so much opportunity. You just have to get up and chase it. 99**



Obeda sharing his story with Citi Australia, Government Ministers and Members of Parliament to welcome a new funding partnership that will enhance BSL's Thrive Hubs.

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# Advantaged thinking

Simple shifts in words and language help us focus on a participant's strengths, interests, and positive contributions - not just their challenges. That's the BSL Advantaged thinking approach.

## Can you uncover words that empower positive change?

L	B	D	F	S	C	M	G	L	J	F	T	Q	R	R
C	A	J	O	V	U	H	H	R	E	V	Y	U	E	D
O	V	I	W	Y	V	P	S	S	O	A	M	V	S	V
N	R	W	T	E	I	T	P	E	N	W	D	S	I	D
N	F	I	M	N	R	K	P	O	M	M	T	K	L	Y
E	C	G	H	E	E	O	I	H	R	Y	X	H	I	G
C	N	X	N	P	H	T	O	E	L	T	W	B	E	N
T	C	G	O	X	A	N	O	I	S	U	L	C	N	I
Q	T	J	X	R	Q	E	M	P	O	W	E	R	C	G
H	Y	T	I	N	U	T	R	O	P	P	O	T	E	N
Q	T	P	O	L	E	V	E	D	Y	D	H	N	W	O
G	S	E	R	U	T	R	U	N	J	B	X	E	Q	L
A	C	H	I	E	V	E	M	E	N	T	X	L	V	E
I	N	D	E	P	E	N	D	E	N	C	E	A	M	B
G	P	R	E	S	P	E	C	T	O	T	E	T	H	M

Words are hidden forwards, backwards, and from bottom to top. Test your eye for detail and see how many you can find.

**Achievement**  
**Connect**  
**Growth**  
**Independence**

**Opportunity**  
**Respect**  
**Talent**  
**Aspiration**

**Develop**  
**Hope**  
**Lead**  
**Potential**

**Strength**  
**Belonging**  
**Empower**  
**Inclusion**

**Nurture**  
**Resilience**  
**Support**

# Together, we make a difference – that you can see



From supporters of 45 years to first-timers who joined just days before, our 2025 supporter event held in October captured the living legacy of BSL's work – 95 years strong and still growing. Held in the State Library's Conversation Quarter on a blustery Tuesday morning, the room felt warm and electric, buzzing with stories, reconnections, and an unmistakable sense of momentum. With more than 100 attendees, it was our biggest annual event yet.

Among the guests was Dr Alice de Jonge, senior lecturer at Monash University and widow of Dr Ian Manning, long-time BSL Charter Member and researcher with the Henderson Inquiry. "This year has been about setting up his legacy," she shared. "Recognising what his life was about – and working with BSL was very important to him." Her presence underscored how Henderson's work continues to shape Australia's understanding of poverty – and our resolve to end it.

We also celebrated new green shoots. A Thrive Hub alumnus became a supporter the day before the event, now building a university career. BSL Youth Advisor Chloe T joined Frankston Thrive Hub Manager Adriano to spotlight youth goals – like Chloe S, an animal lover growing a pet-minding business.



Dr Alice de Jonge and BSL Executive Director Travers McLeod share a moment.

"Good support is being listened to," said Chloe T. "Interests drive passion – and can drive careers."

It was a morning of gratitude and purpose – proof that when communities back communities, change tomorrow isn't just a belief. It's visible, measurable, and growing.

## When communities back communities, change tomorrow isn't just a belief.

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**Thank you for continuing to support our work. You are helping to advance a fair Australia through BSL's leadership on policy reform, our partnerships with communities, and the quality of our services.**



**Brotherhood of St. Laurence**  
Working for an Australia free of poverty

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### Acknowledgement of Country

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways on which our organisation operates. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present.