



Introducing the Brotherhood of St. Laurence

Who we are

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) works for an Australia free of poverty by strengthening the services people rely on — across early years, employment, disability, financial wellbeing and aged care.

Very few organisations deliver services every day and build evidence that shapes national policy in tandem. This is where we excel.

This practice-to-policy approach is our distinct way of strengthening the local services that people rely on every day.

Reforming since day one

For more than 95 years, BSL has helped shape a fairer Australia.

1930s: Father Gerard Tucker established BSL, linking practical support with social reform.

1940s: BSL's first social researcher is employed to examine the causes of poverty and established Coolibah Centre as Victoria's first senior citizens' club.

1950s-60s: BSL's Food for Peace campaign commenced and later becomes Oxfam Australia.

1970s-80s: Established a Research and Policy Centre, marking a significant expansion of BSL's advocacy and evidence-based reform work, and pioneered the family day care trial.

2000s: Co-developed Saver Plus with ANZ, now the world's largest and longest running matched-savings program, and established Goodstart Early Learning with partners.

2010s-20s: Commenced the Education First Youth Foyers project, opened the David Scott School and developed Given The Chance.

Today: Over 100,000 people supported each year with a continued focus on practice-to-policy innovation.



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

**Let's make
change
that lasts**



What we do

One in seven people in Australia live in poverty, including more than 760,000 children. Poverty is not inevitable. It's something we can change – and must change – together. BSL exists to make this change.

People move out of poverty when the services around them work well, meeting life's challenges with opportunity and capability.

This is why we focus on making services easier to reach, to navigate and better aligned with what people actually need.

We help people get the support they need to live the lives they aspire to. We focus on engaging with people early, rather than responding in crisis. Our work is informed by real people and draws on their experiences to make system-level change:

1. Local and tailored

We support people in the places they live and learn – in homes, playgroups, early learning centres and community settings – tailoring support to local needs.

2. Testing and evaluation

People, staff and partners show us what works (and what doesn't). We refine, evaluate and strengthen promising approaches.

3. From person to system

We translate this evidence into the reforms that shape national services, ensuring systems reflect genuine lived experience, not assumptions.

Why BSL and why now

Australia is in the middle of major reforms across early childhood, disability, aged care and employment. These changes will shape the services people rely on for decades.

BSL is already a contributor to improving how these services work for people facing disadvantage. Because we start locally and build reliable and trusted evidence, our insights are informing reforms in real time.

But the pace of reform needs to match the scale of the challenge – and now we need the backing to move faster.

Almost one million children are growing up in poverty. Their families cannot wait for slow cycles of reform. The system being built now must be shaped by what genuinely works for them, and generations to come.

BSL is well placed to share this evidence because we work alongside these families every day.



**Changing tomorrow,
starts today.**

From practice



A preschool child learning alongside a playgroup facilitator.



A father building parenting skills with a family support worker.



A young person planning their next steps with an employment coach.



A single mother starts saving money for the first time with a Saver Plus coordinator.



An isolated older person finds new friends through our social inclusion hub.



To policy



Early years

Our evidence and advocacy with others helped secure the Three-Day Guarantee, giving every child access to early learning and easing pressure on families.



Employment

BSL's Given the Chance program, National Youth Employment Body and Inclusive Pathways to Employment initiatives and Thrive Hubs have been developed to help shape employment service reforms.



Financial security

Saver Plus became a key component of the Australian Government's financial inclusion strategy.



Disability

BSL's daily support as a National Disability Insurance Scheme partner in community helps thousands and this experience is being used to inform better service design. For example, our Enhanced Early Supports Pilot recommendations are informing the design of the Thriving Kids initiative.



Ageing

Evidence from targeted case management shows improved wellbeing and reduced avoidable hospital use, informing aged-care and health reform discussions.

What you make possible

This is a moment when philanthropy can directly influence national reform where, and when, it matters most.

Your investment makes possible:

- **Better support** in early years, employment pathways, financial security, disability services and aged care.
- **Evidence grounded in real lives**, not assumptions.
- **Models that work in communities** and show what it takes to deliver them well.
- **Stronger reforms**, shaped by the people who use these services every day.

This is your invitation to join us

We are seeking partners who wish to invest in an Australia free of poverty.

Multi-year investments from likeminded partners will not only support individuals but will power our early-stage service innovation and evidence work.

Contributions will support demonstration, delivery, evaluation and policy translation across early years, employment and inclusion, including disability and ageing services.

Early investment makes the biggest difference.

The approaches backed now are the ones that shape services for years to come.

Help a person. Change the system.



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The Brotherhood of St. Laurence respectfully 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.

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