

## VIEWPOINT

by THE RIGHT REVD  
MICHAEL CHALLEN

*Executive Director*

Through this issue I wish to thank all you amazing people who responded so readily and generously to our appeals at Christmas time by donating toys, purchasing our Christmas cards, making cash donations and assisting with the Christmas programs. Consequently thousands of families had a happy Christmas and a total of \$350,000 was raised. I am so grateful for your support. You have dispelled the media's notion of "charity fatigue".

From time to time I am asked as to whether the Brotherhood of St Laurence is a "quasi-political" organisation. It seems people do not appreciate our long-standing distinctiveness.

Ever since its arrival in Fitzroy in 1933, it has had two thrusts to its work. The first is meeting human need with as preventative an approach as is possible. For example, not so much handing out food but rather helping people to have income through a job so that they can choose and buy the food they need. The second thrust is informing the community and governments of the impact current attitudes and policies are having upon poor people and where necessary advocating more just policies.

We are not a political machine. But the reality is that if you want to influence the thinking of key policy makers, then you need to act politically but always on the basis of sound research and thought through policies.

In summary, our distinctiveness consists of strategic community services and advocacy.

*+ Michael Challen*



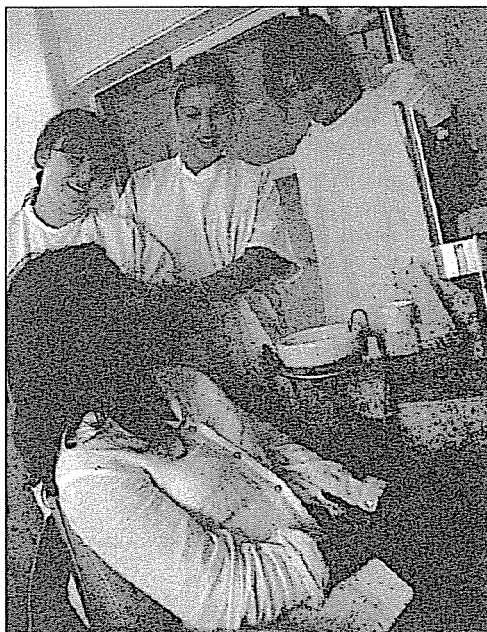
*Baillieu Myer*

## Australian leaders join the Brotherhood

One of Australia's eminent corporate leaders, Baillieu Myer A.C. (pictured) has accepted Charter Membership of the Brotherhood of St Laurence. A former director of many leading Australian companies including his Chairmanship of the Myer Emporium, Mr Myer is noted for his community activities which reflect his concern for local, national and international

issues. With his brother, the late Kenneth Myer, he established the Myer Foundation to work for 'the good of mankind', continuing the Myer family tradition begun by their father Sidney Myer.

Another new Charter member is former Deputy Prime Minister, Brian Howe, currently Professorial Associate, Centre of Public Policy at the University of Melbourne. Mr Howe is currently on assignment in the U.S.A.



*All smiles:  
Dental nurses Claudia Greco (standing, centre) and Angie Schipano (seated) with trainees Dimi Bandouvakis (left) and Janelle Ewer (right).*

## Trainees get their teeth into new employment program

A new Brotherhood employment program is giving 16 young people opportunities in dental health. The STEP program (Scheme for Training and Educating People) at the Brotherhood's Employment Action Centre in Fitzroy is giving participants 12 weeks pre-vocational training before their employment as trainees at the Royal Dental Hospital, and the East Bentleigh and North Richmond Community Health Centres. At the completion of their one-year traineeship, these young people will qualify as Dental Assistants with the option to continue with their education or seek further employment in the dental field.

The trainees, who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, will be using their skills in languages other than English to good use in the community settings of their host employers. The trainees will be learning on the job, while helping non-English-speaking dental clients in potentially confusing or stressful situations.

It is the first time that the STEP program (funded by the Office of Training and Further Education and Group Training Australia) has specifically targeted unemployed young people from non-English-speaking backgrounds to participate in a traineeship program and the first program to have been developed in partnership with the dental industry.