

## VIEWPOINT

by THE RIGHT REV'D  
MICHAEL CHALLEN

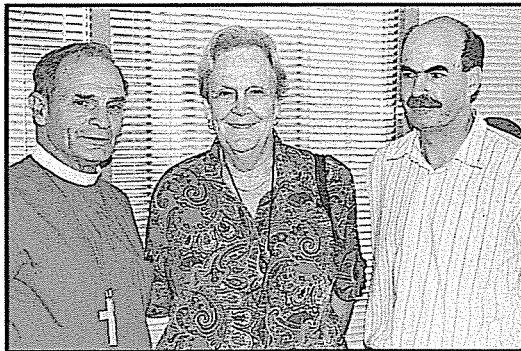
*Executive Director*

You, patient and loyal supporters, no doubt are increasingly being bombarded by mailings and telephone calls from all kinds of worthy causes seeking donations. It is a direct consequence of more organisations (sporting clubs, performing arts groups, social support groups, research institutions and now local schools) having to seek more support outside either commercial activity or government. No longer do welfare organisations have prime access to what was called the 'charity dollar'.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence acknowledged this as far back as the 1950s when Father Tucker commenced his chain of opportunity shops, but there is much competition in that field too. Yet with changes in government procedures and funding and commercial competition even in community services, the Brotherhood of St Laurence will need to have additional money to 'add quality' to what otherwise would be bland and not so relevant services. So we must raise more funds.

But in a fiercely aggressive competitive market what methods should we use? Given the Brotherhood's commitment to fostering a more just and egalitarian Australia, does that mean some methods of fundraising are acceptable while others are not? Specifically, should our raffles have more expensive or less expensive prizes? Should we seek grants from the State Government's Community Support Fund to which millions of dollars are directed from the so-called 'gaming activities'?

Our Board is wrestling with these moral questions and practical strategies. There are signs in any case that we need to look for completely fresh methods of fundraising. So, I welcome your thoughts. Please write to me soon.



*Pictured with Professor Lombard is left, Bishop Michael Challen, the Brotherhood's Executive Director and Tim Gilley, Senior Research Officer in the Brotherhood's Social Action and Research Division.*

## A better start for kids

The Brotherhood of St Laurence is seeking funds to pilot an innovative home-based early childhood intervention program in the western suburbs of Melbourne. The Home Instruction Program for Pre-School Youngsters (HIPPY) is for children aged four to five years growing up in disadvantaged circumstances. The program aims to ensure they have the same learning opportunities as other children and are able to tackle the challenges of school on an equal footing.

The program was developed by Professor Avima Lombard, Professor Emeritus at the School of Education of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who visited the Brotherhood offices in February during an Australian tour.

*Marie Sotiropoulosa (left), a STEP trainee is pictured with STEP Field Officer, Denise Becker.*

## A STEP in the right direction

One of the Brotherhood's many positive responses to unemployment is the Scheme for Training and Educating People (STEP), a program administered by the its Employment Action Centre in Fitzroy.



The Action Centre is one of a number of group training companies throughout Australia which specialise in entry level training and placing jobseekers into apprenticeships and traineeships.

What makes the Brotherhood's STEP program unique is that it focuses on traineeships for disadvantaged job seekers. The program has gone from strength-to-strength, increasing its placement numbers from 25 in 1995 to more than 150 people during the last twelve months.

A traineeship is a 12-month program combining paid work and accredited training. Training may occur at the workplace or at TAFE colleges. About 75 per cent of the trainee's time is spent on the job with the remaining time in training.

Traineeships attract wage subsidies and incentives that significantly reduce the cost for employers. Trainee placements are popular with a wide range of employers — from small businesses with one or two employees to mid-sized companies and national enterprises. The Brotherhood itself has been a solid supporter of STEP, employing trainees in its retail operations and in various administrative and clerical positions.

STEP recruits trainees, prepares them for placement and provides ongoing support to them and their employer. The traineeship program assists jobseekers to enter the workforce, and enables employers to reduce unemployment while pursuing their business objectives. *Action* readers interested in offering traineeship positions are invited to find out more by contacting Peter Grant at the Employment Action Centre on tel. 9419 0888.