



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

4 July, 2016.

Dear Friends,

Re: Social Justice Statement 2016–2017
A Place at the Table: Social justice in an ageing society

Social Justice Sunday will be celebrated this year on 25 September. I am writing to inform you about the Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement and how you can access this document.

The title of the 2016–2017 Statement is *A Place at the Table: Social justice in an ageing society*. It celebrates the value, dignity and significant contributions of older people to the life of the community.


Improvements in technology, health and community services have all played a part in increasing the longevity of the Australian population. More and more, the years following retirement are characterised by continued participation in the labour market, leisure and ongoing contributions through charitable giving, volunteering and care of family members. The ageing of the population also brings a concern for the dignity and wellbeing of the most vulnerable.

Where governments are encouraging older people to extend their working lives, we must ensure the benefits are shared equitably and that the needs of people enduring poverty are addressed. We are also concerned for those experiencing declining health and approaching the end of their lives. The most vulnerable must be protected from isolation, ageism, abuse and any circumstance in which they may feel, or be made to feel, a burden on their families or society. This Social Justice Statement calls for communities of mercy and love, ministering to the vulnerable, building bonds between generations and ensuring everyone has a place at the table.

The Statement will be launched on 6 September. Copies of the Statement can be ordered now from the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council by using the attached order form. Additionally, the Statement will be available for download on the websites of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (www.catholic.org.au) and the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au) from the week of the launch. In the attached summary sheet there is a suggested entry that can be used by parishes, schools and groups as Social Justice Sunday approaches.

I commend this Statement to you and your contacts and would welcome your part in its promotion.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

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Archbishop Denis J. Hart,
President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.