



ACSJC Monthly Briefing August 2013 No 148



From the Secretariat, August 2013

Dear friends,

This September, Australia's Catholic bishops will release their Social Justice Statement for 2013–2014. The Statement's title is *Lazarus at our Gate: A critical moment in the fight against world poverty*.

The title comes from the Gospel reading for Social Justice Sunday, September 29:

'There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores ...' (Luke 16:19–31)

The Statement calls us to re-commit ourselves to the struggle against poverty worldwide – especially poverty in its severest form.

In 2000, the leaders of 189 nations, including Australia, committed themselves to tackling global poverty. Out of this commitment came eight *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015.

Some of these MDG targets have been achieved and there has been enormous progress in relation to others. These successes prove that international action can transform the lives of millions of people. The world's task now is to map out a course beyond 2015.

Despite the enormous progress that has been made in alleviating poverty throughout the world, there is still a great amount left to achieve. By 2015 almost one billion people will probably be living on an income of less than \$1.25 a day. More than a quarter of a million women still die in childbirth annually. Up to eight million children die every year from malnutrition and preventable diseases. And an eighth of the world's people do not get enough to eat.

Australia remains a prosperous nation, even though there are many marginalised and disadvantaged people in our midst and our economy rises and falls. The global financial crisis of 2007–2008 devastated many countries but did not have such a catastrophic effect on Australia.



Yet around 20 per cent of the world's poor live in countries near us – in Asia and the Pacific. It has been said that if you have food in a fridge, clothes in a closet, a bed to sleep in and a roof over your head, you are richer than 75 per cent of the world's population. By that measure, most Australians are well off.

In our region, the bishops say, Australia is the rich man and Lazarus is at our gate.

In thinking about the battle against poverty in recent years – where it has succeeded and where there is more to do – we have to ask:

Who are the poorest of the poor? Who is being left behind in this struggle against poverty?

In particular there are five groups that we are invited to consider:

The hungry of the world

The world produces enough food to feed us all and yet 12 per cent of the global population, 870 million people, are undernourished. Malnutrition has a terrible impact on the very youngest, dooming them to lives of stunted growth and chronic disease. Farmers are forced to grow cash crops instead of food for their communities. Food prices have fluctuated wildly. Solutions can be found in just trade policies, based on the right to food, and on structures of fair land tenure and access to markets.

Disaster-affected communities

None of us can forget the tsunami in December 2004 that killed between 200,000 and 300,000 people. Emergencies from earthquakes, tsunamis, flood and fire are becoming more common and affect more people than ever before. They wreak far greater havoc on marginalised communities than on societies like our own. So building community capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters is both desirable and possible – and very cost-effective.

Indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples make up around five per cent of the world's population, but up to 15 per cent of the world's poor. Indigenous populations face oppression and social, political and economic exclusion, and have far worse health, child mortality rates and education outcomes. We see this in Australian Indigenous communities – in one of the richest nations of the world. Australia should make justice for Indigenous people a priority and commit to work in genuine partnership with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

People with disabilities

In developing countries, 90 per cent of children living with disabilities do not go to school. As few as one per cent of disabled adults in such nations can read and write. In these societies, people with disabilities have far less access to housing, and have poorer health outcomes, lower educational access and higher rates of poverty. Australia needs to place the needs of disabled people at the heart of its strategies against poverty.

People on the move



In 2011, there were more than 42 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. Eighty per cent seek protection in developing countries. In 2011, the nations that hosted the largest number of refugees were Pakistan, Iran and Syria – which has now become a nation from which refugees are fleeing, not seeking protection. Most refugees will wait years or decades before they can go home and many never will. These circumstances force many into desperate choices – living hand-to-mouth in slums or shanty towns, or spending their last savings on risky journeys to places they hope can protect them. Australia needs to focus its aid funds on the world's poorest, not on administering its own internal refugee policy.

The Catholic Bishops ask:

‘How is it that so many still lie like Lazarus at our gate, bearing in their bodies the cost of their struggle and denied access to the table of participation and solidarity time and again?’

This is the challenge that all of us face.

The Statement considers what we can do to assist some of the most vulnerable people in Australia and around the world – as individuals, in our communities and as a nation.

As Christians – a community of faith – we are called to join in Christ's mission to serve the poor and afflicted and to address the structures that cause poverty and hardship.

The parable in Luke's Gospel speaks of a 'chasm' between the rich man and Lazarus. We have to do something to bridge the chasm between rich and poor – the chasm of inequity, injustice and conflict in our world.

Social Justice Sunday falls on 29 September. The 2013–14 Statement *Lazarus at Our Gate: A critical moment in the fight against world poverty* will be accompanied by prayer cards, a 'ten steps' leaflet, and a PowerPoint presentation that can be downloaded from the ACSJC website.

Any assistance you can give in spreading the word about Social Justice Sunday and the bishops' Statement would be greatly appreciated.

Visit the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website for order forms and details about Social Justice Sunday [here](#).



Current Issues/Resources, August 2013

2013 FEDERAL ELECTION RESOURCES

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has issued the major Election Statement 'A Vote for the Common Good', which addresses the issues of poverty, marriage and family, child protection, life, Indigenous Australians, refugees and migration, education, health, peace and development, and ecology and sustainability. The Bishops' Statement has its own webpage and can be accessed [here](#).

The ACSJC has produced an accompanying leaflet, 'A Vote for Social Justice' which highlights some key justice issues this federal election. The leaflet aims to help you think



about some issues that will be decided in this election and offers some questions that could be raised with all candidates in your electorate. Issues are discussed under the headings ‘to empower Indigenous communities’, ‘to life income support payments’, ‘to restore the dignity of asylum seekers’, ‘to eradicate world poverty’ and ‘to build equity into the economy’. The leaflet is available for download on the ACSJC [website](#).

POPE FRANCIS HIGHLIGHTS ASYLUM SEEKERS’ PLIGHT

Speaking at a meeting of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People on 24 May, Pope Francis called for Christian compassion – ‘the commitment to obtain knowledge of the events that force people to leave their homeland, and, where necessary, to give voice to those who cannot manage to make their cry of distress and oppression heard.’

He added, ‘Above all I ask leaders and legislators and the entire international community above all to confront the reality of those who have been displaced by force, with effective projects and new approaches in order to protect their dignity, to improve the quality of their life and to face the challenges that are emerging from modern forms of persecution, oppression and slavery.’ (refer [here](#)).

In his homily when visiting Lampedusa on 8 July, in the weeks following the tragic end for asylum seekers taking a perilous journey, the pope said, ‘Immigrants dying at sea, in boats which were vehicles of hope and became vehicles of death ... These brothers and sisters of ours were trying to escape difficult situations to find some serenity and peace; they were looking for a better place for themselves and their families, but instead they found death. How often do such people fail to find understanding, fail to find acceptance, fail to find solidarity. And their cry rises up to God!’ (refer [here](#))

CHURCH RESPONSES TO RESETTLEMENT PLANS WITH PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The Commission for Social Concern of the **Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands** regrets the Rudd-O’Neil agreement, saying: ‘... while Papua New Guineans are not lacking in compassion for those in need, this country (unlike Australia which is a stable and thriving nation of immigrants) does not have the capacity at this time in its history to welcome a sizeable influx of refugees and provide for their immediate needs and a reasonable hope for a new and prosperous beginning. The leaders of Papua New Guinea and Australia surely know this and therefore appear to be making a very unwise decision ...

‘Papua New Guinea is being led to believe that she is joining Australia in a righteous campaign against people smugglers. But we suspect that this is more a matter of political convenience at the expense of people seeking refuge. The Catholic Bishops’ Conference regrets the manner in which PNG is becoming an accomplice in a very questionable handling of a human tragedy.’ (refer [here](#))

Bishop Gerard Hanna, the **Australian Catholic Bishops’ delegate for Migrants and Refugees** says: ‘The new resettlement arrangements with Papua New Guinea are based on the premise that it is wrong for people fleeing from persecution to seek asylum in Australia. This is fundamentally untrue. We have the duty as members of one human family to help



those who arrive on our shores seeking asylum and to strive with all our resources to assist them no matter how inconvenient this may prove to be' (refer [here](#))

Sr Annette Cunliffe, President of **Catholic Religious Australia**, expressed shock and disappointment at the new hard-line asylum seeker policy, saying: 'What is needed is a long term solution that protects the human rights of all people seeking asylum and treats them with dignity and respect ... It is a tragedy that people fleeing persecution and looking for safety are dying at sea, but the solution is not to close Australia to people in need.' (refer [here](#))

Jesuit Refugee Service Australia says: 'sending asylum seekers to PNG is a punitive, ill-considered and rushed policy announcement, seemingly designed to win an election rather than to strengthen safe pathways for those fleeing persecution. Australia should honour its moral and legal obligations and should not shift this responsibility to an impoverished neighbour. With over 40 per cent of its current population living in poverty, PNG lacks the resources and services to provide for its own citizens, let alone refugees who require specialised services and support of the kind offered by agencies such as JRS.' (refer [here](#))

REFUGEE COUNCIL: 'HYPOCRISY UNDERMINES REGIONAL EFFORTS'

RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power says Australia could not outsource its Refugee Convention responsibilities to a much poorer neighbour and remain credible in advocating that other nations improve protection standards for refugees. 'Through the Bali Process, Australia has rightly encouraged governments in the region to consider a regional cooperation framework which improves refugees' access to durable solutions, emphasising the principles of "burden sharing and collective responsibility'. However, by unreasonably shifting its responsibilities for asylum seekers to Papua New Guinea through this Regional Resettlement Arrangement, Australia's international advocacy for responsibility sharing has been exposed as hollow and hypocritical. This arrangement is without precedent in the world. It cannot possibly be presented as an example of regional cooperation because it is little more than a wealthy country paying a much weaker neighbour to take on its international responsibilities to people seeking asylum.' (refer [here](#))

ON-LINE RESOURCE: 'REFUGEE FACTS'

'Refugee Facts' has been designed to provide quick facts and comprehensive background information on asylum seekers in Australia, in the interest of ethical and accurate reporting. Authors John Menadue AO, Arja Keski-Nummi and Kate Gauthier have compiled this manual, which provides key information and statistics for journalists, editors and advocates on asylum seeker issues. It has been designed to provide quick facts and accessible background information on asylum seekers in Australia in the interest of accurate reporting. Visit [here](#).

'RIGHT TO WORK' CAMPAIGN

Currently some asylum seekers living in the Australian community have the right to work. In November 2012, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship announced new policy changes affecting asylum seekers arriving by boat. These changes place asylum seekers on bridging visas with no right to work and imposing waiting periods of up to five years for processing. A coalition of community groups is calling for an undertaking from the Minister for Immigration to make a policy change extending the right to work to all asylum seekers



released into the community on bridging visas and that the right to work is accompanied by the provision of basic employment support services. As a fundamental human right, asylum seekers should have the right to work. To find out more and to join the campaign, visit [here](#).

SECOND UNHCR REPORT ON MANUS ISLAND CONDITIONS

UNHCR has released its second report on the Manus Island Regional Processing Centre (RPC) in Papua New Guinea. The report finds that while there are improvements since its last mission in January, including the transfer of all children and their families to Australia, the current arrangements still do not meet international protection standards for the reception and treatment of asylum-seekers. Read more [here](#).

‘GETTING SETTLED: REFUGEE WOMEN IN AUSTRALIA’

‘Getting settled’ is intended for anyone who has an interest in refugee women and their settlement experience in Australia. It contains facts and figures and a range of good practice ideas that have been shown to be effective in the successful settlement of women and their families. It recounts the real-life stories of some of the women themselves. Access the report [here](#).

LIFE INSIDE DETENTION CENTRES

SBS has launched an interactive online documentary ‘Detention Centre’ to provide an insight into detention conditions based on the views and perspectives of people who have lived, worked or volunteered at immigration detention centres. Former detainees share their experiences and describe a typical day in detention and reveal the psychological and emotional impact of being in detention. Experts and academics share their views, including RCOA CEO Paul Power, former Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock, International Detention Coalition Director Grant Mitchell and UTS Professor of Sociology Dr Andrew Jakubowicz. View the documentary [here](#).

NEW INDIGENOUS HEALTH PLAN WELCOMED

The peak body representing Indigenous primary health care organisations has urged leaders to view the new National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan, released this week, ‘through the prism of what needs to be done to fix the shameful health and life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and not through the prism of a looming federal election’. The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) congratulated the Federal Government for the release of the new plan, saying it moves Aboriginal health from being viewed ‘in a clinical and isolated way and instead adopts a more holistic approach’ that considers social and mental well-being, mental health, the impact of drugs and alcohol and the place of culture in health. Click here to access the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan. Click [here](#) to read NACCHO’s full response.

TAKE ACTION FOR INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Help amplify the voices of the world’s poorest and most marginalised; join thousands of Caritas Australia supporters calling on MPs from all backgrounds and parties to prioritise



Indigenous Peoples in Australia's aid program. Tell your local MP that Indigenous justice matters to you. Sign the Walk As One petition to:

- Raise support for increased commitment to addressing issues of extreme poverty and injustice for Indigenous Peoples around the world
- Ask the Minister and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are prioritised across all of AusAID's work, including the Mining for Development strategy
- Ensure that Indigenous injustice is addressed as a matter of priority by the Government, in accordance with the principles and recommendations laid out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

When you receive an answer from your MP, forward the letter to us at walkasone@caritas.org.au or GPO Box 9830 Sydney NSW 2001. More details are [here](#).

CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

It's time to Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's Constitution. It's the right thing to do. 'This is much more than a question of symbolism, this is a question of national wellbeing and national identity. It's about coming to terms with who we are as a nation and deciding who we want to be in the future.' Noel Pearson, Cape York Institute. Join the Recognise campaign [here](#).

CHRISTIANS UNITE FOR PALESTINIAN FREEDOM

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN) has members across the denominational and theological spectrum, as well as Christian aid and development agencies working in Palestine and Israel. The group is calling on Australians to respond to the plight of Palestinians living under repressive conditions in the Middle East. 'Our Christian brothers and sisters in Palestine are crying out to us,' says the group's co-convenor, Rev. Gregor Henderson. 'Every month thousands of people from around the world travel to Jerusalem to remember Jesus, but Palestinians living just a few kilometres away can't reach the site.' PIEN has launched a website and social media sites with theological and political analysis about the situation for Palestinians. For more information, visit [here](#).

ANTI-POVERTY WEEK 13-19 OCTOBER

Poverty and severe hardship affect more than a million Australians. Around the world more than a billion people are desperately poor. The main aims of Anti-Poverty Week are to: strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and within Australia and to encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including actions by individuals, communities, organisations and governments. Last year, at least 600 organisations around the world participated in more than 400 activities during the Week, with a total of more than 10,000 people. Why not organise a display, stall or award? Maybe a workshop, lecture or forum? How about a fundraiser, fact sheet or petition? For information and ideas, visit the website or email apw@antipovertyweek.org or call 1300 797 290. [Web](#).

PALMS AUSTRALIA PETITION

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council PO Box 7246 ALEXANDRIA NSW 2015
Ph 02 8306 3499 Fx 02 8306 3498 admin@acsjc.org.au www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au



Palms Australia has launched a petition to Senator Bob Carr, calling on him to re-instate AusAID's volunteer fund. The petition highlights the value of Palms Australia's programs to Australia's international aid efforts and contrasts them with the program AusAID currently supports, known as AVID. Each AVID volunteer costs AusAID over \$60,000 per year in the field. Due to Palms' lean operations, the humble willingness of our volunteers to live on a 'local allowance' and the support and infrastructure of our networks, most Palms volunteers cost close to half the AVID price to place. (This excerpt of the final PVF report demonstrates what was achieved under just one of its numerous objectives.) Palms Australia is calling upon its supporters and those who support an aid program which prioritises increased effectiveness per tax dollar spent, to sign its petition [here](#).

RELIGIOUS LEADERS UNITE ON CLIMATE POLICY

Religious leaders across Australia have come together to sign an open letter, organised by the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), that calls upon Australia to be a part of the global solution to climate change. Archbishop Philip Wilson, Chair of Catholic Earthcare, is one of sixteen signatories to the letter supporting the need for dialogue and calling for less reliance on fossil fuels and a greater focus on clean, renewable sources of energy. To access the letter, visit [ARRCC](#) and [Catholic Earthcare Australia](#).

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR 2013 HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

Nominations are now open for the 2013 Human Rights Awards. The aim of the Awards is to recognise people who are working to achieve better human rights outcomes in their work or community. Some nominees are well known, but most are just ordinary people making a difference to human rights. Nominees are entered in either general or media categories. General categories include: the Human Rights Medal, Young People's Human Rights Medal, Law, Business, Community (Individual), Community (Organisation). Media categories include: Literature (non-fiction) Print and Online Media, Radio and Television. To find out more, visit [here](#).

ONLINE SURVEY ABOUT CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, has sent an email to organisations concerned with Catholic social thought, urging them to promote the following survey. GSPeL, a social science research company in the United States, is doing a survey internationally to help the Church understand how Catholic Social Teaching is perceived, received and understood by various groups of the faithful, other believers and non believers. The survey can be accessed [here](#) and has the deadline of 30 September 2013. You may fill it in only once. For questions regarding the survey, please contact Andreas Widmer at gspelsurvey@gmail.com.

VISION OF HUMANITY: 'GLOBAL PEACE INDEX'

Vision of Humanity is a proponent of the need to further study, advocate and act on peace. It groups together a number of interrelated initiatives focused on global peace which enjoy the support of a wide range of philanthropists, business people, politicians, religious leaders and intellectuals. As part of the Global Peace Index, which measures peace according to 22 qualitative and quantitative indicators, is an interactive world peace map. To access the 2013 Report and Map, visit [here](#).



LOGO COMPETITION: ‘JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION’

The Franciscan Friars invite you to design a logo that will be used by their international office for *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* (JPIC). The Franciscan JPIC Office works to animate the Franciscans and those they work with, to address issues of: poverty and exclusion in our society; peace; human rights; care for the environment and the ethical use of the world’s resources. The design for the logo must be simple, eye catching and actively express Franciscan’s JPIC values. Logo Submissions in Australia must be made by 4th October 2013– Feast of St Francis. The top ten from Australia will be submitted to the International JPIC Animation Committee for final judging. The designer of the winning logo will receive a letter of recognition from the Franciscan Minister General, along with a statue of Saint Francis from Assisi. For more information about the competition and the Franciscan JPIC work in Australia and internationally please contact: Sarah Menassa-Rose, Animator of JPIC, Franciscan Provincial Office, 47 Victoria St Waverley NSW 2024. Phone: 02 93699309. Email: jplic@franciscans.org.au



ACSJC Publications August 2013

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2013–2014 – ORDER NOW!

This year’s Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement is entitled ‘Lazarus at Our Gate: A critical moment in the fight against world poverty’. The ACSJC is now taking orders for the Statement. An order form, letter from the President of the Bishops Conference and summary material are available on our [website](#).

SERIES PAPER 74 – ‘TIME TO DRAW THE LINE: FINDING A JUST SETTLEMENT BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND TIMOR-LESTE’

Beneath the Timor Sea vast deposits of oil and gas lie between Australia, Timor-Leste and Indonesia. Who has a just claim to those resources? What does international law say about them? What are Australians’ obligations as citizens of the world? Fr Frank Brennan tries to outline some answers to these questions in this latest Series paper, a sequel to his 2004 paper ‘The Timor Sea’s Oil and Gas: What’s Fair?’ He writes: ‘This paper attempts to explain the issue so that Australians of good will can reach a conclusion about the best way forward for any Australian government committed to justice, transparency and good neighbourly behaviour.’ What can we learn from the teaching of Christ and his Church as we grapple with these questions? Frank Brennan sets out the facts calmly and clearly and points us towards some ways forward. Available [here](#).

2013 FEDERAL ELECTION RESOURCE – ‘A VOTE FOR JUSTICE’

The ACSJC election leaflet is available for download on our [website](#).

PASTORAL LETTER – FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER 2013

The Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker for 2013 is entitled ‘Time for a New Start – a call to increase allowance payments’. It is available for download on our [website](#).

DISCUSSION GUIDE: 2013 WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE



The theme for the 46th World Day of Peace Message from Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI is *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*. This message reminds us at that we all have a role to play in building peace in our communities and the world. The Message focuses on human dignity, rights and responsibilities, as well as the fiftieth anniversaries of Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* and of the beginning of the Second Vatican Council. The ACSJC has prepared a Discussion Guide for Pope Benedict's Message, which is available on our [website](#).



Social Justice Diary, August 2013

1 Thu 2010: Convention on Cluster Munitions comes into effect

2 Fri 1965: First Indochinese refugees allowed to settle in Australia

4 Sun Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day

National Vocations Awareness Week begins

5 Mon National Homeless Persons' Week begins

6 Tue 1945: Atomic Bomb dropped on Hiroshima

8 Thu St Mary MacKillop

Eid al-Fitr, the Muslim Breaking of the Fast

11 Sun Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

12 Mon International Youth Day

15 Thu Assumption of Mary

1945: End of World War II in the Pacific

16 Fri 1975: Wave Hill Station, NT, returned to the Gurindji People

18 Sun Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Vietnam Veterans Day

19 Mon World Humanitarian Day

2007: Beginning of protests led by Buddhist monks in Burma

23 Fri International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

25 Sun Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time



Refugee and Migrant Sunday

26 Mon 2001: MV Tampa rescues 433 asylum seekers from a sinking vessel. Australian Government refuses entry to its shores and sends troops to prevent disembarkation

27 Tue 1999: Death of Dom Helder Camara

29 Thu International Day Against Nuclear Tests

30 Fri International Day of the Victims of Forced Disappearances

1999: 78.5% of East Timorese people vote in favour of independence

