

**Address of Mr Jack de Groot  
National Director, Caritas Australia**

at the launch of

**Catholic Social Justice Series No. 53**

***Ending Hunger - How far can we go?***

**Melbourne Town Hall  
Wednesday, 15 June 2005**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for this opportunity to be here and to work with our sister organization, the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council in promoting this important paper today on the Millennium Development Goals.

As the Chair of the Make Poverty History Campaign here in Australia and as the CEO of Caritas Australia, we wish to congratulate Bruce on his paper and the very timely release of it. This week we have seen the agreement on a formula by the G7 nations to cancel the debts of some of the world's poorest nations. In responding to Bruce's Challenge of *How Far Can we Go?* (And may I say Bruce has truly reflected the age Old Catholic question in his title of "how far can you go") The response is quite seriously the whole way.

Making Poverty History is about 4 things:

1. Cancelling the debt of nations who are chained by outrageous realities that mean they spend more on debt repayment than on health or education;
2. Increasing the volume and targeting of Aid. The Australian public knows the value of aid as seen in the massive outpouring of generosity during the tsunami tragedy. This aid needs to be targeted so it attends to the real needs of communities and not serves the national interest of donor countries alone;
3. Fairer trade that acknowledges that we are not all on a level playing field – particularly the poor; and

4. Programs that achieve good governance in nations that have been victim to corruption.

Why are we on about this? Because every day throughout the world 1000s dies of poverty related hunger, ill-health, conflict or preventable disease. So what? – Well our generation has the skills, technical gifts, and financial resources to stem such poverty related death. This death does not just kill individuals – it maims communities and stifles opportunities. Ours is a generation with a great opportunity to Make Poverty History

Bruce challenges us - How Far can we go to end Hunger and to Make Poverty History? – The answer is all the way.

We in Australia are part of a global community with an opportunity to do it. This is not jut a mission of rock stars and Gordon Brown – it is the opportunity of a generation to live up to the greatness that is within its imagination to achieve. The people are there, the skills are there – it is now a question of our generation's will to go the whole way.

Make Poverty History will hold its first International White Band Day to coincide with the G8 meeting in Gleneagles during the first week of July. In Australia, we will launch our campaign on 1<sup>st</sup> July and ask all Australians to wear white bands that call us to Make Poverty History. Prominent buildings, landmarks in every city will see this. The agencies who raised over \$315 million to respond to the tsunami are the ones calling on Australians not for money but for the commitment of our nation to play our part in Making Poverty History. We will have more White Band Days in September to coincide with the UN millennium summit plus 5.

In closing lets I invite you all to join in this campaign to Make Poverty History. We have great public messages and faces to our campaign. Corporate Australia can contribute to this activity to move our government to play our part.

So I leave you with this one message to Make Poverty History.