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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land in which we live. We acknowledge their deep spiritual connections to this land and we thank them for the care they have shown to Earth over thousands of years.

We do not serve the human by blasting the mountains apart for mineral resources, for in losing the wonder and awesome qualities of the mountains, we destroy an urgent dimension of our own reality.

There is need to be sensitive to the Earth, for the destiny of the Earth identifies with our own destiny.

Thomas Berry's words reflect the ongoing consequences of insensitivity, greed and exploitation. We invite you to read what people are saying and doing as they respond to the challenges facing us today.

Peta Anne Molloy, Anne Shay

Exploitation of the earth is exploitation of the human. Elimination of the aesthetic splendours of the Earth is diminishment of existence.



Rio+20 is a defining moment that could spark a global innovation to move us towards a sustainable future. We urge the world to grasp this moment and make history.

State of the Planet Declaration, London March 2012

We do not serve the human by blasting the mountains apart for mineral resources, for in losing the wonder and awesome qualities of the mountains, we destroy an urgent dimension of our own reality.
(Thomas Berry.1999)

At the Rio+20 Conference, world leaders, along with thousands of participants from governments, the private sector, NGOs and other groups, will come together to shape how we can reduce poverty, advance social equity and ensure environmental protection on an ever more crowded planet to get to the future we want.

Rosemary Grundy pbvm Queensland is one of the five IPA representatives at the Conference.

Take Action

Earlier this year a new section was added to the Society website. <http://presentationsociety.org.au/>

Take Action has links to relevant and current petitions, campaigns, information etc. on issues relating to women and children, Indigenous peoples, environment/sustainable living and human rights.

You will find **Take Action** just above **What's Happening** in the right hand column.

Check the Society website every week!

www.presentationsociety.org.au/

Brisbane Briefing

On 9 May Rosemary Grundy and Peta Anne participated in a special briefing on the "UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

In his presentation, David Forsyth, from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities summarised the Conferences leading up to Rio+20 and outlined the objectives and institutional framework of Rio+20. He then developed the 7 Australian priorities:

- * Oceans and Blue Economy
- * Sustainable Development Goals
- * Indigenous Land and Sea Management
- * Mining for Sustainable Development
- * Disaster Risk Reduction
- * Gender Equality
- * Food Security

The questions that followed showed that people were aware of the discrepancies between what the Government proposes and what it is actually doing right now. Among the issues raised were:

- Mining
- Restoration of land when mining finishes
- Will land be returned to Indigenous peoples?
- Federal policy and action on Reconciliation are not linked to sustainability
- Rights of Nature
- Institutional reform, governance

It is interesting to note that when we identified ourselves, David Forsyth recognised the Presentation Sisters as writers of letters and told us to keep them coming.



Exploitation of the Earth ...

Congratulations to Christine Milne



The first Presentation Ex-student to lead a Political party in Australia, Christine Anne Milne was elected Leader of the Australian Greens in April 2012. Born in Latrobe Valley in 1953, she was a student at St Mary's in Hobart in the late 1960's.

Tony Kevin describes her as 'an interesting paradox — a feet-on-the-ground Tasmanian country woman, a farmer's daughter, who became a fervent Green and now sees her prime task as being to build coalitions of trust and policy cooperation between the Greens and the threatened rural and small business communities of Australia, against the power of plutocracy.'

People speak of her grass-roots humanity, in her concern, for example, for the well being of asylum seekers, her concern for the care of the earth and the need to price pollution and build an economy built on renewable energy.

We wish her well.

cf Tony Kevin *Eureka Street* 18/4/12

IPA Submission to Rio+20

Some of the Principles which we believe should underlie a Green Economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication are:

1. Respect for life
2. Recognition of the relationship between gender equality and sustainable development
3. Recognition of women's role as change agents and community builders.
4. Importance of Education on the inter-relatedness of the three pillars of development: social, economic and environmental
5. Good management of forests is essential to the development of a green economy.

Joan Power pbvm

Healthy Oceans

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Use less fossil fuel-based energy. Use as little plastic as possible.

Don't eat endangered or threatened species. Limit your consumption of seafood in general. Learn which species concentrate toxins and toxify you.

Urge your government to increase protection of fish stocks and to preserve marine sanctuaries.

Sustainable World SourceBook

NSW Sisters Protest against Coal Seam Gas

Four members of the Presentation Sisters of Lismore and around 12 of their associates were among the estimated 7000 people who took part in the recent *Lock the Gate* rally in Lismore.



The sisters marched under a banner which read "Presentation People Say No to CSG."

While they're normally associated with pastoral work in schools and hospitals, Sister Anne Shay of Ballina said it's not unusual for the Sisters to take a stance on social justice and environmental issues.

"We're against anything which exploits the earth and the whole community of life," Sister Anne said.

When it comes to power generation, Sister Anne supports sustainable energy all the way.

"I very much believe we should be going down the road of solar and wind power. I do not think we should be putting more money into mining or extractive industries," Sister Anne said.

cf *CathNews* 20/5/12

The Folly of Bottled Water

Consumers waste billions of dollars a year on billions of kilolitres of bottled water. These unnecessary purchases create garbage and finance the corporate takeover of water supplies. Bottled water can cost up to a thousand times more than tap water and funnels the profits from the sale of water, a public resource, to private companies. As much as 40% of bottled water comes from an ordinary tap!

Production, transportation and disposal of bottled water consume large quantities of water and energy. You actually conserve water and spare yourself the carcinogenic leaching of plastic chemicals into the liquid, by switching from the bottle to the tap.

Sustainable World SourceBook

... and of Peoples

Asylum Seekers - Some Voices

I was a stranger

and you

welcomed me.

'Illegals' - What the Media Doesn't Tell Us

Fr Maurizio Pettena, Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office, recently commented on how public conversation about refugees and asylum seekers seems to be degenerating once again into political statements and rhetoric.

- The term "illegal" when applied to the flow of asylum seekers to Australia is plainly incorrect. Australia is a signatory to the refugee convention which stipulates that what would usually be considered as illegal actions (e.g. entering a country without a visa) should not be treated as illegal if a person is seeking asylum.
- from 1/1/1976 to 30/4/2010, 23 024 people have come by boat to Australia seeking asylum. That's an average of 677.1 asylum seekers a year. It would take 149 years to fill the MCG once with asylum seekers coming by boat.
- Pakistan currently accepts more than 20 times the number of refugees as Australia each year.

Salad Bowls

We need to get some perspective and at times even we need some light relief, the Australian way of helping us to get to the bones of the issue.

A few months ago, as my staff and I were poring over the two-page newspaper spread about the 'cost of community detention', we had to laugh. We looked down the list of items that the government is providing to small numbers of families to help them settle in Australia, a list which included household items, basic electronics and furnishings.

One of my staff suddenly stopped at one item and exclaimed: "Wow, the government is paying for a salad bowl! What an outrage!!!"

The listing of this item was just a small example of how sensationalised the issue of asylum seekers has become.

That a national newspaper would allow an article like this to be published, and that people would then use it as a basis for their prejudice is far more outrageous than a \$5 salad bowl being given to a desperate family trying to rebuild their lives.

Maurizio Pettena *Eureka Street* 29/5/12

Refugees in the dark over security checks

After being in the community for over a year, a pregnant Tamil refugee and her two children were detained due to an adverse security assessment. Indefinite detention of people already found to be refugees affects about 50 cases. These people cannot be returned to their country because they meet the refugee criteria, but they will not be granted permanent residence in Australia because of the adverse security assessment. The human cost of the security process is significant. Some refugees have been compelled to wait many years for a security clearance.

Kerry Murphy *Eureka Street* 24/5/12

Excerpt from Society Letter to Nicola Roxon

We wish to express our concern about the welfare of the Sri Lankan refugee known as Ranjini. We understand that Ranjini witnessed her first husband's death in Sri Lanka and that after spending time in Australian detention centres she was granted refugee status. At that time she was not assessed as being a security threat.

The media also report that she was summoned to what she and her husband believed was a regular monthly monitoring session. Her husband was not allowed to accompany her to the interview and was given only five minutes to farewell her and the children. This deprivation of liberty, and the manner in which this was done, are no doubt inflicting trauma on her, her two sons and her unborn child.

If Ranjini does present a security threat, she has a right to know what she has done to warrant this assertion.

The Final Report of the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Immigration Detention Network, released in March 2012, found that the effects of prolonged detention include the heightened risk to mental health and exacerbation of previous trauma.

Among the factors that threaten Ranjini and her children are:

- * isolation from husband and friends, which was achieved by moving her to Sydney;
- * uncertainty about the reason for her detention and the length of time she will be detained;
- * anxiety about her children.

We ask you to ensure that

- * Ranjini and her children be transferred to a Melbourne detention centre
- * steps be taken to ensure her release as soon as possible.

Reconciliation—there are more bridges to cross



“Stronger Futures” or Stolen Futures?

Voice of the Elders

To the people of Australia. 7 February 2011

We are the people of the land. The land is our mother. For more than 40,000 years we have been caring for this land. We are its natural farmers.

Now, after so many years of dispossession, we find once again we are being thrust towards a new dispossession. Our pain and our fear are real. Our people are again being shamed.

Under the intervention we lost our rights as human beings, as Australian citizens, as the First People of the land. We feel very deeply the threat to our languages, our culture and our heritage. Through harsh changes we have had removed from us all control over our communities and our lives. Our lands have been compulsorily taken from us. We have been left with nothing.

The legislation under which we now live does not comply with international law. It is discriminatory. We are no longer equal to other Australians. We are no longer equal to you.

As people in our own land, we are shocked by the failure of democratic processes, of the failure to consult with us and of the total disregard for us as human beings. We demand the return of our rights, our freedom to live our traditional lives, support to develop our economic enterprises to develop jobs and to work towards a better future for our peoples.

So extreme have been the actions against our people that we must appeal to all people of Australia to walk with us in true equality. Speak out and help to put an end to the nightmare that Northern Territory Aboriginal people are experiencing on a daily basis.

Rosalie Kunothe-Monks OAM, Utopia.

Harry Nelson, Yuendumu

Djapirri Mununggirritj, Yirrkala.

George Gaymarani Pascoe, Milingimbi.

Rev. Dr Djiniyini Gondarra OAM, Galiwin'ku.

Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM, Nauiyu

Dhanggai Gurruwiwi, Yirrkala

Concerned Australians <http://www.concernedaustralians.com.au/>

The Yolngu Nations Assembly, representing 8,000 Indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory, have declared:

We reject the Stronger Futures Bill (and the Bills associated with it) and call on the Senate to discard these Bills in full. We have clearly informed you that we do not support the legislation. We call on both the Australian Federal and Northern Territory governments to end their interventionist policies and agendas, and return to a mindset of partnership based on the principles of self-determination.

Lisa Martin *SMH* 2/5/12, Independent Media Centre Australia 11/5/12

Read the full statement at http://concernedaustralians.com.au/media/Stronger_Futures_Statement_Yolngu.pdf



Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Dr Djiniyini Gondarra, Senior clan leader from Yolngu Nations Assembly

“Stronger Futures”

Voices of the Prophets



“The wretched unfortunate Aborigines of the country – the first occupants of the lands over which your flocks and herds now roam – have a very strong claim upon you. Nor will the Lord hold you innocent if you have not used your best endeavours to promote their temporal and eternal well-being”.

Archbishop Polding 1849 cf Clare Condon The Good Oil March 2012

Many groups have spoken out in support of the Yolngu peoples' declaration, including the Australian Catholic Bishops and Religious:

We urge the Federal Government to abandon this legislation and develop

trust and respect which will promote collaboration with the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory in decision-making relating to their future.

We call for an urgent shift from punitive controls to measures that restore community control, rebuild Aboriginal initiative and capacity, improve living conditions and show respect for Aboriginal languages and culture.

ACBC & CRA Media Release 5/5/12

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