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'We listen deeply to the cry of those made poor and to the cry of the Earth.'

*IPA Assembly 2007*

**Intolerable conditions in many parts of the world compel people to flee their country. In this issue of Justice Jottings, we are challenged by the needs of two such groups – children in detention and people who are trafficked.**

**We are also invited to reflect on ways we can respond to the cry of our wounded earth.**

'We will address the root causes of poverty, especially by confronting personal and corporate greed which exploit Earth, her peoples and the whole community of life.'

*IPA Assembly 2007*

**We conclude by looking at the two foci for addressing this IPA global issue and the strategies that we in Australia are planning to implement.**

*Anne Shay, Peta Anne Molloy*

## *Children in Detention Centres*

The issue of children in the immigration regime is one refugee advocates will be focusing on in 2009. The former coalition government enacted into legislation the principle that

*"Children shall be detained as a measure of last resort"*

The current Immigration Minister declared in July 2008 that children would not be detained ....in an immigration detention centre (IDC). Instead, both the former and the current governments have used centres called Residential Housing Projects that are much more humane and 'homelike' but are still clearly places of detention.

We rejoice that children are no longer kept behind razor wire in desert camps, and we acknowledge that sometimes it is difficult to

find proper accommodation for the whole family unit, hence the use of the Residential Housing Projects.

However, calling the centre a residential housing project instead of a detention centre doesn't change the fact that it is detention. Children are still being detained.

This is most critical on Christmas Island. On mainland Australia the Department has a range of programs and access to external service providers, which ensure that a very small number of children are detained in housing projects. Families with children are usually kept in community detention arrangements with monitoring if they are not eligible for a bridging visa.

It's almost impossible to achieve this level of service in a remote location like Christmas Island.

If the Government is serious about the rights of

children and their families, they need to abolish the remote asylum processing of children on Christmas Island and bring them to mainland Australia.

### **Action**

Please write/email to the **Minister Chris Evans**  
**PO Box 1322, West Perth WA 6872** or  
**Fax 08/9481 4244.**

To email you need to log into website <http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/homepages/senators.asp?id=AX5> and follow the link to Online Contact Form.

### **Sample letter**

Dear Minister

I am concerned about the Detention Centre in Christmas Island which does not have the services which are vital for the rights of children.

I urge you to abolish the remote asylum processing of children on Christmas Island and bring them to mainland Australia.

# *Exploitation of Peoples ...*

## *Reflection*

### *Earth Hour*

Earth Hour 2009 is set to switch off the globe. Already 377 cities, and double the number of countries that participated in 2008, are committed. With hundreds more cities expected to sign up to switch off in the coming months, Earth Hour 2009 is setting the platform for an unprecedented global mandate for action on climate change.

### *How green is our footprint?*

A question often asked...

Does it use more energy to switch the light on and off every time I enter and leave a room, or to leave it on all evening?

Sustainability Victoria advises turning lights off if you are going to be out of the room for longer than the typical TV ad break.

*The Age 2/02/2009*

We are, then, in a very difficult place. The kind of thinking we need about ourselves and our place on the planet—our interrelationship and interdependence with all other human beings and other life-forms—has been deadened by the hand of a consumerist/militarist paradigm that exalts the comfort and superiority of elite individual human beings. We need to elect representatives to our governments who will create laws to limit human energy use at all levels—from emission caps on oil refineries to regulations on emissions from automobiles. The personal and the political need to join to legislate the kind of human action in the world that will create a just and sustainable planet. Individuals cannot do this simply by trying to live “environmentally” within an energy-mad society. The system must be changed—the

## *Australian Religious Response to Climate Change*

The religions of Australia have a shared sense of moral purpose on climate change. The Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) is a multi-faith network committed to taking the action on this most pressing issue of our time. In the face of ecological damage and social injustices, we affirm our love for this planet and its inhabitants and our deep reverence

for life. We seek transformation of a world tottering on the brink of disaster, equipping each other to be the change we wish to see. Check out website below to view Sisters on the Planet on U Tube.

<http://www.oxfam.org.au/campaigns/climate-change/take-action/sisters-on-the-planet/>

## *Climate Change Summit 19-20 March*

The next UN Climate Change Conference will be held in December in Copenhagen. An attempt will be made to reach agreement on how to handle climate change. In an unprecedented move, scientists held an emergency summit in Copenhagen in March in a deliberate attempt to influence policy. They warned the world's politicians they are being too timid in their response to global warming.

A number of studies published since the 2007

report show that carbon emissions are rising faster than expected and existing greenhouse gas targets may not be enough to prevent catastrophic temperature rise.

The IPCC has warned that temperatures could soar by up to 6C by 2100 if current rates of carbon pollution continue, and that nations should prepare for an average rise of 4C.

## ... and of the Earth



### *Kakadu in Danger*

THE Ranger uranium mine inside the World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park is leaking 100,000 litres of contaminated water into the ground beneath the park every day.

This equivalent of three petrol tankers of contaminant is leaking from the mine's tailings dam into rock fissures beneath Kakadu. (Tailings are piles of crushed radioactive rock left over after the mining process.)

There have been more than 150 leaks, spills and licence breaches at the Ranger uranium mine since it opened in 1981.

The mine was originally scheduled to cease mining last year but there are now plans to tunnel under flood plains from an open pit in a move that would extend mining to 2021.

The mine is owned by Energy Resources of Australia; British mining giant Rio holds 68 per cent of the shares in ERA.

ERA has been repeatedly warned about its management of the mine, with a previous government-appointed scientist declaring in 2004 that ERA was "complacent" about protecting workers and people living near the mine.

Dave Sweeney Australian Conservation Foundation is urging Federal authorities to require ERA to end their

expansion plans, phase out current mining, and clean up the mountain of mess it has already caused in Kakadu.

#### **Action**

Please write/email to Hon Peter Garrett, **Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts**  
**PO Box 249, Maroubra NSW 2035** or  
**Fax 02/9349 8089**

To email you need to log into website <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/members/member.asp?id=HV4> and follow the link to Online Contact Form.

and/or **Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Climate Change and Water**  
**PO Box 6237 Halifax St Adelaide SA 5000** or  
**Fax 08/8223 5588**

To email you need to log into website <http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/homepages/senators.asp?id=00AOU> and follow the link to Online Contact Form.

**Ask them** to compel ERA to halt plans to expand the mine until it explains how it intends to recover the water and meet its obligations to rehabilitate the world heritage-listed area, 250 kilometres south-east of Darwin.

### *Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans*

#### **Western Australia**

Kathleen Laffan pbvm, Bernice Tonkin CSB and I have formed a small group. We have arranged for Dr Suma Kaare (Edmund Rice Institute for SJ Education Coordinator) to present an information evening about trafficking at the end of April as a start to forming a larger group. We also hope to contact the Australian Federal Police so that we can include local facts in the presentation if possible.

We have invited Sr Patricia Mulholland CSB, who works at UN on trafficking, to address interested people.

Lucy van Kessel W.A.

#### **Queensland**

I was invited by Pauline Coll, along with Joan Murphy rgs, Noela Leamy mfc, Claire Cooke ssps, and Br Jim D'Arcy cfc to establish an ACRATH group in Queensland. We held our first meeting on 27 February. We began to

plan some strategies that will take this ministry forward.

Peta Anne Molloy Qld

#### **Victoria**

After the National ACRATH meeting in February we sent a letter to the Immigration Minister asking when he will be announcing the new visa framework.

An advisor to Chris Evans, the Immigration Minister, assures us that in the near

future, an announcement will be made regarding changes to the current visa framework affecting people who are trafficked. It is being looked at now by the Ministers and departments who have responsibility for counter trafficking.

In March Victorian ACRATH members committed to the six areas of ACRATH operation: awareness raising, direct service, networking, advocacy, international networking and internal resourcing.

Joan Kennedy Victoria

**Listen...the cry of the Earth  
the cry of the poor**



We listen deeply to the cry of Earth heard most loudly in the cry of those made poor and we are moved to attend with urgency to the woundedness of our global community. Therefore we will address the root causes of poverty, especially by confronting personal and corporate greed which exploit Earth, her peoples and the whole community of life.

We commit ourselves to two interconnected foci for action in order to address the root causes of poverty.

1. Exploitation of natural resources by large corporations in a way that damages Earth, those made poor (especially women, children and Indigenous Peoples) and local cultures .

2. Exploitation of primary producers (food, agriculture, fishing, unethical free trade) leading to global crises such as the global food crisis.



## News about the IPA Global Issue in Australia

To assist us as Australian Presentations to work with the IPA Global Issue here in Australia, the Society engaged the services of Angela Ballard, a Researcher who has worked with the Catholic Religious of Queensland (CRAQld) Social Action Office (SAO) to undertake some preliminary research around the issue from an Australian perspective.

At the March meeting of the Society Justice Contacts held at Stella Maris, Mount Eliza, we

examined Angela's draft report on her research and suggested directions for further investigation.

The issue is a complex one and one of our first needs is to educate ourselves about the situation here in Australia and to link with other groups who share our values and who are working on similar concerns.

We have examined the plans developed by other Congregations in Ireland, England and the United States.

We will meet in Brisbane in May when we hope to plan a campaign which will involve a number of strategies to raise awareness of how Australia's natural resources are being damaged and the impact that this has on the Australian people and the whole community of life in this country.



Water — our most precious resource

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