



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on 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.

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May the greenness of foliage fill our hearts with gentle forgiveness
May the nesting birds inspire us to make our homes and our planet secure with love
May the mystery of trees decorate the landscape of our minds
May the community of life which trees support be truly blessed.

Amen

2011, the International Year of the Forests, invites us to raise awareness of the importance of the forests as the lungs of the planet and the home of most of the world's biodiversity. This issue offers you some facts and stories about what people are saying and doing to care for the Earth and to promote the rights of the poor.

Anne Shay, Peta Anne Molloy

2001 is the International Year of Forests

Forest Facts

Did you know that:

- Forests cover 31% of the total land area.
- Primary forests account for 36% of forest area
- The livelihoods of over 1.6 billion people depend on forests
- Forests are home to 80% of our terrestrial biodiversity
- Trade in forest products was estimated at \$327 billion in 2004.
- Forests are home to 300 million people around the world
- 30% of forests are used for the production of wood and non wood products. *UN website*



The beetle cannot live without the tree,
And the tree cannot live without its invisible partner,
a fungus so humble that it cannot be seen...

Fungus, beetle, bird, tree

And the human sitting in its shade..

Our world is a world of interdependencies woven
so tightly it sometimes becomes love.

(Tim Flannery)

The United Nations declared this year to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. At the climate change conference in Cancun, Mexico, governments agreed on plans to save forests. Deforestation is responsible for 20 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming. By promoting the conservation and sustainable management of forests, we can not only reduce climate impacts and increase resilience, but go a long way towards slowing the accelerating rate of biodiversity loss. <http://www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011/>

Some Good News

Wangari Maathai, the first African woman to win the **Nobel Peace Prize** is a pioneering academic. Her role as an environmental campaigner began after she planted some trees in her back garden. This inspired her in 1977 to form an organisation - primarily of women - known as the **Green Belt Movement** aiming to curtail the devastating effects of deforestation and desertification.



Her desire was to produce sustainable wood for fuel use as well as combating soil erosion. Her campaign to mobilise poor women to plant some **30 million trees** has been copied by other countries. She said her tree planting campaign was not popular when it first began. Mrs. Maathai has been arrested several times for campaigning against deforestation in Africa. "It took me a lot of days and nights to convince people that women could improve their environment without much technology or without many financial resources."

Exploitation of Peoples ...

Every gun that is made,
every warship launched,
every rocket fired
signifies, in the final sense,
a theft from
those who hunger and
are not fed,
those who are cold and
are not clothed.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Stop Press Military Spending

World military spending
\$US 1.6 trillion in 2010
(\$US 1.5 trillion in 2009).

Australia spent
\$AUS 26 billion in 2010
(2009 - \$AUS 20 billion)

We can achieve these results
by:

- **Informing ourselves and others of the real situation in the Northern Territory.**
- Telling our elected representatives **this behaviour is intolerable** (by **e-mail, text, letter/ telephone** to Prime Minister's office and our local members).
- **Supporting organisations like Reconciliation Australia.**
- Above all, we **must not sit passively** and let our fellow Australians continue to be treated as they have been. *Alastair Nicholson*

Global Day of Action on Military Spending

In 2010, \$1.53 trillion dollars was spent on the military around the world. It is an almost inconceivable amount of money. Put into perspective, the World Food Summit estimates that \$30 billion a year could eradicate world hunger. That amount is spent on the military in a single week. World Catholic Religious Leaders consider this ethically bankrupt. There are so many other priorities that require financial support: poverty, climate change, job creation.

A 10% reduction in military expenditure internationally would go a long way to solving myriad problems facing planet earth.

Across the world millions of people mobilized in favour of LIFE celebrating a **Global Day of Action on Military Spending on April 12, 2011**. People joined together in actions to focus public, political and media attention on the costs of military spending and the need for new priorities.

It is necessary before all else to provide peace with other weapons – different from those destined to kill and exterminate mankind. What are needed above all are moral weapons

Every citizen has the responsibility to work to secure justice and human rights, through an organized social response.
Pope Paul VI

Human Rights and Northern Territory Intervention

The government is currently requiring the traditional owners of Aboriginal land to accept leases of 40 years as the price of providing the inhabitants with decent housing. Traditional owners are placed in an impossible position, because if they refuse to comply with Government demands they are hurting their own people and their children. This is unconscionable behaviour on the part of Government. The passage of a referendum paying lip service to our Indigenous people in a preamble to the Constitution will fool nobody into believing that we have changed our approach. Action is required.

What needs to be done is:

1. Reintroduce the Racial Discrimination Act in an unqualified form;
2. Bring the Intervention to an end;
3. Provide proper housing and education services without tying them to land tenure;
4. Return control of Aboriginal lands to Aboriginal peoples;
5. Establish a representative body so Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are taken into partnership and given proper representation;
6. Provide proper health/ education services to all Australians regardless of race or location;
7. End mistreatment of Aboriginal children; reduce family violence/alcoholism and enlist Aboriginal peoples to help achieve these ends;
8. Amend the Constitution to recognise the rights of Aboriginal/ Torres Strait Islander peoples;
9. Introduce Human rights legislation to protect the rights of all Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. *cf The Hon. Alastair Nicholson AO RDF QC*

... and of the Earth



Celebrating the Carbon Price

The Government's proposal to introduce a carbon price has released a torrent of words and printer's ink. The wide range of opinions - with the hopes and fears they engender - indicate that this is a very complex issue. Two prominent writers offer some views on the carbon price.

After the 2010 Federal election, the Multi-Party Climate Change Committee (MPCCC) was formed to study all policy options for setting a price on carbon. The committee has now announced a temporary fixed carbon price starting in mid-2012, but with firm plans to move to an emissions trading scheme three to five years thereafter.

Here is a brief roadmap of the key issues:

1. The committee must agree and win public approval for an **initial carbon price of between \$20 and \$30 a tonne.**

2. The committee must decide **where the carbon price will be imposed.**

3. **FUEL** Garnaut warns that exempting fuel would undermine the scheme.

I support an **interim compromise**, initially

offsetting the price for a few years by reducing the existing fuel excise tax.

4. **INDUSTRY** When and how far will the carbon price go in these industries? This is a very emotive issue as it affects jobs and the economy. The Government needs to implement policies that will speed up the movement to renewable energy.

*Tony Kevin
of Eureka Street*

The Government's decision is a step in the right direction to stimulate sufficient investment to help Australia achieve 30 per cent of our energy needs from renewable sources by 2020. Pacific Island countries, which themselves have contributed next to nothing to the human causes of climate change, have most to gain from the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that will result from measures such as Australia's carbon price.

*Phil Glendenning
Director, Edmund Rice Centre*

The carbon price announcement was the important first step on a hard road. Now it will be up to the community to unite behind building an achievable multiparty consensus.

Tony Kevin

Did You Know?

- The energy saved by recycling one aluminium can would power a TV for three hours.
- Twenty aluminium cans can be recycled with the same energy required to produce one new can from raw materials.
- The energy saved by recycling five glass bottles would light a 100W globe for 20 hours.
- Recycling one tonne of paper saves 13 trees, 2.5 barrels of oil, 4100 kWh of electricity, 4 cubic metres of landfill and 31,780 litres of water, all of which would be required to produce one tonne of virgin paper. *Visy, 2001*
- Organic matter makes up about 40% of solid waste sent to landfill in Australia. Removing organic material could reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by around 3%.
- The greenhouse gas emissions prevented last year by recycling in Western Australia is equivalent to taking 168,000 cars off the road. *WA Department of Conservation*

The current environmental crisis should not be separated from the kind of people we are, the market economy we benefit from, the social goals we subscribe to, and the kind of entertainment we seek. Since all of these facets of the problem can be slated home to choices of human beings, we can only conclude that it is we ourselves who are the ecological crisis. It is we ourselves, therefore who must change if the crisis is to be faced. *Neil Brown, Compass 2004*

Asylum Seekers - What People are Saying



Words to Reflect On

It is futile for earthbound humanity to still cling to the dark and poisoning superstition that its world is bounded by the nearest hill, its universe ended at the river shore, its common humanity enclosed in the tight circle of those who share its town and views and the colour of its skin. It is the task of our educators and of young people to strip the last remnants of that ancient, cruel belief from the civilisation of humankind.

Philip Pinto cfc

There are still a number of frightened disciples locked in many upper rooms, afraid to burst out, afraid to be disturbed by the new, afraid to disturb others. Wishful thinking will not transform ourselves or our institutions. We have to stand up and be counted. It is a dangerous business: it is an unfashionable career. We will be accused of rocking the boat and of subverting the system. We will be threatened with the cutting off of subsidies. We will be accused of being crazy. But to people of vision it is life giving. I invite you today, to translate this into reality.

Philip Pinto cfc

Waiting in a Timeless Land

Imagine waiting for a bus or train and it's late. Within a few hours, you would become uncomfortable and protest against the inconvenience, or rant against those responsible for the delay. People inside detention centres wait for months and years. They don't know exactly how much more time they will spend there and become fearful that the outcome will be devastating.

As a former detainee, I can see why they riot, self-harm or escape into the wilderness, even temporarily. I was an Afghan refugee who fled the Taliban regime and spent **five months in the Curtin detention centre in 2001. Ill-equipped and without proper medical facilities and accommodation**, it housed about 900 detainees.

Inside the centres, **anxiety** blocks out your efforts to be normal and rational - not to mention the **feeling of fear** that runs through a detention camp. Everyone **dreads** going to an immigration office when asked, because most of the time it is not good news.

Currently, there are almost **7000 asylum seekers in detention centres**. They have uncertain futures. Hundreds have been recognised as refugees but are waiting for security clearances. **No evidence has yet been found that asylum seekers coming by boat are a threat to national security**. A faster process for security clearances offers hope to those in detention. It could also prevent overcrowding and reduce disturbances in detention centres.

What each asylum seeker goes through each day in a detention centre has remained largely invisible to those outside, unless riots happen. **The most difficult part of being in a detention centre is the waiting and being in a state of limbo**. It is a particular kind of waiting; you can do nothing to speed up the process.



I could only see the red dirt, barbed wire and fences.

Hungry to know what was happening outside, I once approached a security guard who was reading *The West Australian* newspaper. I asked him if I could borrow it. He lowered his glasses and responded in an authoritative voice: "I am not allowed to give the newspaper to the detainees."

Abdul Karim Hekmat *The Age* 29/3/11

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The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council's Media Release

The Federal Government must ease the suffering of asylum seekers in remote facilities waiting for their claims to be assessed. It is hard to imagine the frustration and fear these men are experiencing. Detention for long periods simply adds to the trauma of being forced to flee persecution and danger in their homelands. The more efficient and streamlined processing of claims needs to be put into effect immediately out of a basic sense of compassion.

of Bishop Christopher Saunders (Cath News 21/1/11)