



**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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*Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveller who has been attacked. It is the role of justice to prevent the attack.. Frederic Ozanam*

This issue looks at the travellers under attack today - the asylum seeker, the disadvantaged Indigenous person and the land, too, which is under attack: the Darling Downs farmlands and the water of eastern Australia. The lives and communities of rural people are in danger from mining projects. The homes of the Pacific peoples are threatened by climate change.

*Peta Anne Molloy, Anne Shay*

***Oceania Justice Contacts' Meeting 31 August - 2 September***



Bernadina Telemai (PNG) and Ruth Colman (NZ) joined the Australian Justice Contacts for the Oceania Justice Contacts' meeting in August/September at Manly. Our discussions and reflections focused on practical ways of furthering the IPA Focus: Exploitation of the Earth and her people through advocating for **the reduction of carbon emissions and the development of renewable energy**. We also reflected on and planned action to support Asylum Seekers and to promote *Reconciliation: More Bridges to Cross*.

Human Rights

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) meets periodically to review the human rights record of each country. During August this Committee reviewed Australia's achievements and gaps.

Closing the Gap

The CERD report acknowledged the National Apology and other achievements of federal Governments. The report also highlighted the disadvantages Indigenous peoples experience in health and in many areas of life that affect health.

**Our Action:**

- Summarise the issues raised in the CERD report.
- \* Write to leaders of all Federal political parties urging bipartisan cooperation in policy and action.
- \* Encourage Presentation people to reduce our use of fuel-based energy on 10/10/10.
- \* Invite Presentation People to renew their commitment to the First Friday fast.
- \* Research the impact of mining on people, food and water.



**Exploitation of women in PNG**

Local women are being used for prostitution by the mining companies, especially the Asian companies. There is an increase in HIV AIDS.

Because the companies are so powerful, it is important for the PNG sisters to find ways of talking to people to get the message across. Lobbying is not an option.

**Some News from Those Who Came Across the Sea**



**Carbon Tax in New Zealand**

A carbon tax has been introduced in NZ. Power companies are putting prices up and all prices will go up as a result. There is concern about the impact on the poor. The option of Wave power is being examined. A recycling initiative turning used plastic into bricks will begin in Dunedin.

## *The Cry of the Poor ...*

### *Voices for Asylum Seekers and Displaced Peoples*

The media have at times demonised the people who come to our shores seeking asylum from war and injustice.

This campaign of dehumanisation can turn reality upside-down and make the powerful feel they are the victims of the powerless.

How can it be that a group of desperate asylum seekers could inspire such animosity and rage throughout Australia and reignite old fears rather than an informed debate about our obligations to the most marginalised and powerless?

These people remain at risk of being pawns in a continuing game of political point-scoring until our national leaders find the resolve to adopt a bipartisan approach to meeting Australia's obligations.

*Australian Catholic Bishops  
Social Justice Sunday 2010*

#### *What Would You Do?*

It's got to start by changing the story. It's got to start by recognising the fear - the sometimes irrational fear - that has been whipped up in the community. But not to do what both major parties have done, which is essentially to base policies on that fear.

The first thing to do is to put the issue into perspective, to talk about Australia's humanitarian obligations, and to explain to people the

situation of people who are coming by boat.

One example is that there has been no attempt by either party to explain the linkage between people arriving in Australia from Afghanistan, and Australia sending troops to Afghanistan to fight the Taliban.

*David Manne, Executive Director of the  
Refugee and Immigrant Legal Aid  
Centre, Melbourne*

#### *Climate Change—Still the Moral Challenge*



Ursula Rakova  
Matriarch of  
Carteret Island people

We have no airport on our islands.

We don't drive cars.

We have no electricity.

But we cannot live on our islands any more.

We have had to leave our home.

The people of Kiribati have shown over the years that they possess the skills and knowledge to live sustainable lives in harmony with their environment which is of course 98% ocean. What they are yet to achieve with regard to climate change is for the world to take them and their needs seriously, and to stop polluting the atmosphere.

It is not enough for the rest of the world, simply to watch and allow Kiribati to deal with a problem they did not create.

*Phil Glendinning, Director of the Edmund Rice  
Centre, Sydney*

An Australian shopping basket carrying 25 average household essentials travels 21,073 km just in road miles. This is almost the whole way around Australia's coastline. The greenhouse gases generated by all the trucks carrying these 25 items on any given day is the equivalent of 2,830 cars driving for an entire year! And that's just one shopping basket of 25 items!!

*Every creature is a word of God.*

**Meister Eckhart.**

**When we diminish any creature,  
we diminish the word of God.**

## ... and the Cry of the Earth

### Last Man Standing

Glen Beutel, a former geologist and first-rate wildlife photographer, is chronicling the death of a town swallowed by King Coal. "A koala colony and several endangered flora and fauna species lay in the path of the excavators," he says.

Glen, 57, presents a lonely and tragic figure in a ghost town where not even the dead are allowed to rest in peace. Idyllic Acland, 177km west of Brisbane, is about to be wiped from the map.

Glen is refusing lucrative offers from New Hope Coal subsidiary New Acland Coal to "pack up and push off" like everyone else.



Glen says the mine has contributed to the environmental, cultural, historical and social disintegration of the town and has had an adverse affect on farms.

It's hard to disagree. The last man standing may be doing so on a \$20 billion pile of coal.

More than 9000 hectares of land - some of it prime grazing country - is now in the hands of the mining giant.

cf Des Houghton *Courier Mail* 3/4/10



**Blatant disrespect for the environment will continue as long as the Earth and its potential are seen merely as objects of immediate use and consumption, to be manipulated by an unbridled desire for profit.**

John Paul II *Ecclesia in Asia*  
November 1999

### What's the Problem with Coal Seam Gas?

Coal seam gas (methane) is often regarded as "clean" because it releases half as much greenhouse gas from a power station as coal does. Coal seam gas is extracted by pumping out huge amounts of water which then allow the methane to surface.

**This water contains sodium chloride and sodium bicarbonate – extremely toxic - causing irreversible damage to agricultural soil.**

#### When the Rains Come...

the "salt" and any water in the "ponds" will be washed across the soil and into the Condamine River and downstream to the Murray Darling System.



Coal Seam Gas companies are proposing to drill up to 40,000 wells within the Surat Basin (300,000 km<sup>2</sup> of central southern Queensland and central northern New South Wales). It is estimated that up to 350,000 million litres of water will be pumped out EVERY YEAR. (about two-thirds of Sydney Harbour). This water will be stored in huge "evaporation ponds", where it will evaporate, leaving millions of tonnes of "salt" residue.

#### When the Dust Comes...

the residue will blow across the land.

For more information go to:

[www.sodd.com.au](http://www.sodd.com.au)

[www.fof.org.au](http://www.fof.org.au)

[www.basinsustainabilityalliance.org](http://www.basinsustainabilityalliance.org)

### Not Just a Local Issue

The Condamine Floodplain on the Downs has prime agricultural land – topsoil there is 2 to 3 metres deep, unlike most of Australia where the topsoil is very shallow.

Below this flood plain is the **Condamine Aquifer (part of the Great Artesian Basin)**. This pristine water table supplies several towns in the area as well as the farming community.

When there is a flood, the water flows into the **Condamine River** and then to the **Murray Darling System** affecting **NSW, Victoria and South Australia...**

# Reconciliation - There are More Bridges to Cross



## Flawed Investigations into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

**At the most basic level, for Indigenous peoples, social justice means that our lives will not be dominated by a foreign rule of law which fails to adequately support or take into account our unique identities and aspirations.**

**It means that our voices will enter into a dialogue from which all peoples in a society negotiate the type of society they live in.**

*Professor Mick Dodson, Co-Chair  
Reconciliation Australia*

Amnesty International (Australia) has written letters to the Federal Attorney-General and his counterparts in Queensland and Western Australia expressing concern about the outcome of investigations into the deaths in custody of two prominent Aboriginal men and calling for changes in the way such cases are handled in future.

The Western Australia Director of Public Prosecutions decided recently not to lay criminal charges in the case of Aboriginal elder Mr Ward, who died in 2008 after being driven 360 kilometres in a prison van in stifling heat without air-conditioning.

In Queensland, a Crime and Misconduct Commission report found serious flaws in the way police investigated Mulrunji Doomadgee's death in the Palm Island watchhouse in 2004.

The police officer who was originally charged with manslaughter in the case was later acquitted.

Amnesty International's letters call on both the Western Australia and Queensland governments to raise improved processes for protection from ill-treatment of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in custody in the discussions which are currently underway between Australian governments regarding the creation of a National Preventive Mechanism for inspections of all places of detention.

Amnesty International also calls on the two state governments, as well as the Federal Government, to ensure that all recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody are implemented.

*Amnesty International News 8/7/2010*

We acknowledge all the species with which we share our planet.

We stand in solidarity with our ancestors in faith on whose shoulders we stand.

We acknowledge all those who give their lives working for a just, peaceful and sustainable planet.

We acknowledge all those with whom we live and work on this endangered planet.

We acknowledge each one of us gathered here and honour the dignity and wisdom of each one.

We acknowledge all those waiting to be born.

It is for their sakes that we work to make this world the best possible world

*Connections India*

## Invitations to Care for Earth

### Meat Free Day

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change invite you to abstain from meat one day a week for entirely new reasons!

If all Australians reduced their meat consumption by 150 gm per week, we would save over 6 million tonnes of greenhouse gases in a year.

That's the equivalent of taking an eighth of Australia's cars off the road. In terms of caring for the

poor, 40% of the world's grain is fed to animals, while a billion people are undernourished.

The concept of a meat-free day is spreading. It has been endorsed by the city councils of a range of Belgian cities, Cape Town in South Africa, Sao Paulo in Brazil, San Francisco, Bremen in Germany and the schools in Liverpool, UK. Please support this simple but important initiative.

See [www.arrcc.org.au](http://www.arrcc.org.au)

### Ethical Tourism

Just Act is asking people to 'get on board with ethical tourism.' They say that 'The way we travel has serious impacts on local people and the environment.'

For more information visit [www.justact.org.au/action-46-harm-less-holidays/](http://www.justact.org.au/action-46-harm-less-holidays/).

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