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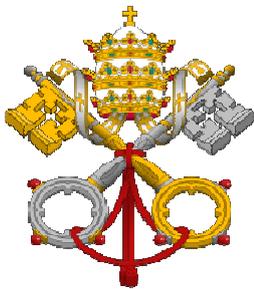
**We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land in which we live. We acknowledge their deep spiritual connections to this land and we thank them for the care they have shown to Earth over thousands of years.**

As women with listening hearts we are called to be a voice for justice, gaining strength from our union with each other. We have a growing sense of our integral relationship with the entire **Earth community** within our expanding universe. This calls us to engage in eco-theological reflection and to seek ways of living simply and sustainably.

*(Society Congress 2011)*

We invite you to join us in reflection and action in response to the challenges facing Earth and our exploited peoples.

*Peta Anne Molloy, Anne Shay*



**Declaration from the Pontifical working group on Climate change.**

We call on all people and nations to recognise the serious and irreversible impacts of global warming caused by the human induced emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

We appeal to all nations to develop and implement without delay, effective and fair policies to reduce the causes and impacts of climate change on communities and ecosystems, aware that we all live in the same home.

By acting now, in the spirit of common responsibility, we accept our duty to one another and to the stewardship of a planet blessed with the gift of life.

Pontifica Academia Scientiarum  
11/5/11

LOVE YOUR MOTHER...



With the cooperation of politicians and grassroots organisations, Bolivia is set to pass the Law of Mother Earth, which will grant nature the same rights and protections as humans. The piece of legislation, called la Ley de Derechos de la Madre Tierra, is intended to encourage a radical shift in conservation attitudes and actions, to enforce new control measures on industry, and to reduce environmental destruction.

The law redefines natural resources as blessings and confers the same rights to nature as to human beings, including: the right to life and to exist; the right to continue vital cycles and processes free from human alteration; the right to pure water and clean air; the right to balance; the right not to be polluted; and the right

to not have cellular structure modified or genetically altered. Perhaps the most controversial point is the right "to not be affected by mega-infrastructure and development projects that affect the balance of ecosystems and the local inhabitant communities".

cf John Vidal *The Guardian* 10/4/11

**Campaign Goes Global**

An international coalition of environmentalists and academics has launched a global campaign for the creation of a **new U.N. convention to protect 'mother earth'**.

Maude Barlow, a lead campaigner for the U.N. convention, said, 'We are trying to say that there is no such thing as a human right if the earth cannot sustain life and it is no coincidence that where poor people are dying, so is the water, forests and air around them.'

*The rights of humans and nature are deeply intertwined, and 'we forget this at our peril', she added.*

Thalif Deen *Inter Press Service* 24/5/11



### A Common Climate Myth

**“Other countries are not taking action so Australia shouldn’t put a price on its own carbon pollution until they have.”**

Even if you accept the argument that we should wait for others to act first on climate change, this myth ignores the fact that 32 countries and 10 US states already have carbon emission trading schemes, including the European Union, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Also, countries such as China, Taiwan, Chile and South Korea, and a number of Canadian provinces, are either considering developing their own or already have trial emissions trading schemes in place.

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



## Exploitation of the Earth ...

### Switched Off and Turned Inwards

*This editorial from the Sydney Morning Herald names a challenge facing Australia.*

JUST four years ago, when the Lowy Institute asked Australians to rate the most important foreign policy goals, "tackling climate change" topped the list. In the Sydney Think Tank's poll this year, climate change has dropped to 10th place.

Topping this year's table of what Australian foreign policy should be trying to achieve, 81 per cent nominated "protecting the jobs of Australian workers". It seems we have started to cut ourselves off and turn inwards.

At 4.9 per cent, an unemployment rate most other rich countries would envy, Australia is far from having a job crisis.

Yet this focus on ourselves in a world racked by far greater worries is part of a wider trend. In *There Goes the Neighbourhood*, a book about Australia's response to the rise

of Asia, Dr Michael Wesley finds a disturbing paradox. Thanks partly to two decades of economic prosperity, Australians have never been more widely travelled. Yet we have become a country of insular internationalists, complacent and incurious about the big changes reshaping the world and how they will affect us.

Our political leaders offer scant inspiration to raise our sights. Instead, they brawl about issues such as asylum seekers in a way that corrodes the national debate. The results show. Despite Australia's relatively small number of boat people (an average of 1300 a year over the past 34 years), the Lowy poll found 72 per cent of Australians concerned about boat people, with 85 per cent of those thinking too much money was spent processing them. If the main parties ditched their wildly expensive offshore processing policies, perhaps voters would be more open-minded than they think.

Editorial SMH 28/6/11

### Religious Leaders Rallied for Climate Talks with PM

Twenty-eight religious leaders of many different faiths converged on Canberra on June 2nd to push for action on climate change. They met Julia Gillard, Greg Hunt, Andrew Wilkie and about 20 other MP's. Jill Finnane and Geraldine Kearney sgs represented CRA.

The group lobbied the government on behalf of many people of faith who believe urgent action is needed to curb climate change. Bishop Browning urged that people remember:

*“Our generation has been given humanity’s last chance to avert a climate emergency. Our grandchildren will just have to bear with the results of what we decide to do now.”*

Earth is mother of all, for contained in her are the seeds of all.

The earth of humankind contains all moistness, all verdancy, all germinating power.

It is in so many ways fruitful.

All creation comes from it.

**Yet it forms not only the basic raw material for humankind, but also the substance of the incarnation of God's son.**

Hildegarde

The religious leaders urged the Government to carefully consider the structure of a carbon tax and to think more broadly about options for reducing carbon emissions.

They advocated for public investment and incentives for the creation of renewable energy, stronger mandatory energy efficiency standards and substantial adaptation funding for developing countries.

The leaders were from Hindu, Uniting Church, Jewish, Baha’i, Buddhist, Catholic, Moslem, Jain, and Anglican religions.

## ... and of Peoples

### *Asylum Seekers—what People are saying*



#### Excerpt from Letter to Minister Chris Bowen

The politicisation of asylum seekers in Australia has created inhumane policies that dehumanise vulnerable people and undermine our reputation as a country which upholds the human rights of all. These policies erode people's capacity to empathise with others in need. People have been fleeing violence and persecution since the beginning of human history. It has never been an orderly process and never will be.

It seems that we have lost the capacity to empathise, to imagine what it would be like for us, what lengths we might go to, to save our lives and secure a hopeful future for our children. Would that we relearn to welcome the stranger, care for our neighbour and treat others as we would hope to be treated.

*Australian Presentation Justice Contacts*

“The current scale of the operation on Christmas Island is not sustainable.”

(Ombudsman, Allan Asher)

#### GOOD NEWS

The sale of Certified Fairtrade products in Australia and New Zealand has seen incredible growth over the past year, following a decision by major confectionery companies such as Cadbury and Whittakers to go Fairtrade.

Awareness of the Fairtrade label continues to grow significantly amongst Australians and New Zealanders: 37% Australian public and 51% New Zealanders are aware of the brand.

Fairtrade is a unique, independent system providing farmers with the security of fair minimum prices for their produce and additional investment for social, environmental and economic development in their communities.

*Pro Bono Australia 10/3/11*



#### **Christmas Island - Off Shore Detention and Processing**

Distance makes everything so difficult. It costs a fortune: five times as much to process refugees out there as on the mainland.

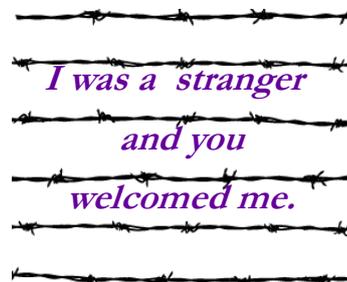
Lawyers, churches, charities, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Amnesty International, Immigration Department advisers and refugee advocates have been calling for years for processing to be abandoned on Christmas Island.

‘We have recommended for more than two years now that the government stop holding people in detention on Christmas Island,’ (Catherine Branson QC)

cf David Marr *SMH* 26/3/11

Surely every decent Australian would want innocent children and their families to be given every protection. Instead detention continues to expose children to well-documented harm to their development and wellbeing.

*Bishop Pat Power, Canberra*



### **Please Help**

#### **Poker Machine Business**

Profiteering poker-machine operators are preparing to spend \$20 million to derail Government plans to kick Australia's poker machine addiction. Prime Minister Gillard committed to help gambling-affected families -- but insiders fear she'll back-track in the face of pressure from vested interests. Half the world's poker machines are in Australia - creating a generation of problem-gamblers and devastating families. Let's create a massive petition to end pokie addiction and help the Prime Minister keep her word.

Sign AVAAZ's petition calling on the Government to tackle problem gambling:

[http://www.avaaz.org/en/end\\_pokie\\_addiction\\_2/?v](http://www.avaaz.org/en/end_pokie_addiction_2/?v)

# Reconciliation—there are more bridges to cross



## Closing the Gap - A New College - A New Principal

A new Jesuit primary school will open in the Sydney suburb of Redfern later this year for Aboriginal students. Tentatively named Jarjum College, the school will identify children who have fallen through the cracks and who are not attending school regularly due to various reasons of disadvantage. It will provide students with opportunities to learn in a more informal setting, in order to open up more options for them in the future.

Jarjum will offer short-term assistance to at-risk children, returning them to the mainstream schooling system wherever possible. But foundation principal Beatrice Sheen concedes that once the community's precise needs are revealed, the model may change.

The school aims to teach the children in a way that appeals to their own special strengths.

Beatrice Sheen is an excellent model of resilience for the future students of Jarjum. She left school at the age of 14 and married when she was just 17.

"My husband was 17, too. We're still together, six children later. I discovered as a child that my father was Aboriginal. I'm a Gamilaroi woman from Gunnedah.

I'm honoured and excited to be involved in this project. I know that the school's success will depend largely on the support of the people it serves.

This college belongs to the community, the people, and that's how I want it to be run. These students have got different needs. Their learning styles are different. So the kids fall through the gaps, and that's why we're trying to close the gaps. But if we can teach them resilience and they make it to high school, then they've achieved. And if they go further, well....

Everything will be practical, because they won't hang around if it's airy fairy. We'll use a different pedagogy for the kids because we want them to come to school, we want to make them welcome, so it's going to be a nice learning environment.



This flexible approach has extended into the community, where locals have been involved in consultation at every step of the process.

For some of these kids, their parents are in jail, or on drugs. So they're the kids we want to pick up. You do it respectfully by talking, by going out and meeting people. Peter Hosking SJ (Rector of St Aloysius College) and I have been going out and meeting people. And once we meet them they're okay. They ask 'Well, when are you opening? I've got three kids that can go there!'"

cf Province Express 29/3/11



When Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recently visited Australia, she took a close look at Government policies towards the Indigenous peoples.

This is a summary of her report:

'I welcome the advances the Government has made in addressing some of the disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

## UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Reports on the Northern Territory Intervention

peoples. In particular the National Apology and Australia's formal recognition of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, along with significant investment made to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and education. **However, I believe these efforts are being undermined by policies that fail to recognise the right to self-determination for indigenous people, a key element of the UN Declaration.**

In my discussions with Aboriginal people, I sense the deep hurt and pain they have suffered because of government policies imposed on them.

I also saw Aboriginal people making great efforts to improve their communities, but noted their efforts are often stifled by inappropriate and inflexible policies that fail to empower the most effective, local solutions.

**I would urge a fundamental rethink of the measures being taken under the Northern Territory Emergency Response. There should be a major effort to ensure consultation with concerned communities and their consent and active participation. Such a course of action would be in line with the UN Declaration'.**

SMH 25/5/11

### Society of Presentation Sisters—Australia & PNG



71 Grey Street  
St Kilda Vic 3182

Phone: (03) 9534 5726

Fax: (03) 9534 5727

Email: [society@pbvm.org.au](mailto:society@pbvm.org.au)

Web: at <http://presentationssociety.org.au/>