



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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As we listen to the cry of the Earth and the cry of those made poor, we seek for ways in which we can speak out and act in partnership with others for global justice. This call emerged from our 2003 and 2007 IPA Assemblies.

We look forward in hope to the September International Presentation Assembly in Newfoundland.

We ask you to join us in our prayer for openness to the Spirit as we discern what is emerging within us as Presentation people in mission—what we see as God's dream for us at this time.

Anne Shay, Peta Anne Molloy

Rio+20: Battles won and lost

We must recognize that there can be no justice over the long term without sustainability, and creating a sustainable world will require not only radical change in systems and structures of power but also a radical change in the way we in affluent societies live.

It's time to recognize that if we are serious about the values of equality that we claim to be the core of our politics, we must scale back the level at which we live.
Robert Jensen

There were mixed reactions to the outcome of the Rio+20 Earth Summit. IRIN, a UN news website has summarised the good and not-so-good in the final document. Below are some of these points:

The good

The green economy - the document sets out the **vision** in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. The conditions laid down attempt to address the **mistrust** between the developing and developed world that has built up over the years.

Technology transfer - To set out an alternative energy path, developed countries called for the transfer of technologies from the developed world to them. Rich countries resisted the inclusion of the word 'transfer'.

Right to food - This implies an obligation by countries to enforce the right to food by way of law. The text also calls for the phasing out of agricultural subsidies.

Sustainable Development Goals - The document suggests the SDGs should complement and strengthen the Millennium Development Goals in the development agenda for the post 2015 period.

The not-so-good

Oceans - Instead of a definite plan, countries have **merely** agreed to initiate the negotiation of an implementing agreement to address the conservation and sustainable use of marine diversity in areas **beyond national jurisdiction**.

Finance - There was no real commitment to funding as the EU economic crisis cast a deep shadow over the proceedings. The developing countries had called for a commitment of finance to help countries scale up sustainable goal projects, and for the transfer of technology.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report/95691/RIO-20-Battles-won-and-lost>

The Cry of the Poor ...

Voices for Asylum Seekers and Displaced Peoples

I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matt. 25:35)

With all the media attention on people smuggling, offshore processing and politics, it is easy to forget that on 27 June this year, 14 people were killed in Iraq, taking the death toll for June to 404.

Last year in Afghanistan, estimates suggest between 3000 to 15,000 civilians were killed.

These nations – along with Iran and Sri Lanka – remain in the top 10 countries at risk of serious human rights violations and mass killings.

Fr Maurizio Pettena CS

Former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser condemned key recommendations in the Houston report, which the Government has adopted in total as ‘racist’ and in some ways worse than John Howard’s Pacific Solution. Mr Fraser predicted mental breakdowns and suicides and said that the policy destroyed ‘many Australian values’.

M. Grattan & D. Flitton
The Age 15/8/12

**This legislation will not save lives, it will kill people.
It will send brave people insane.**

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young

The Government-appointed Panel on Asylum Seekers, chaired by Sir Angus Houston presented their report on 13 August 2012. Four days later, on 17 August, the Migration Legislation Amendment Act became law, clearing the way for off-shore detention and processing of asylum seekers. It is unclear what will happen to children. There are many unanswered questions about Australia’s adherence to the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Here are some of the voices calling for justice:

Can we learn from the past?

Have we forgotten our history, and how well we’ve done, when Australia organised an orderly departure program for those people fleeing the Vietnam War, and dictatorship stricken countries such as Chile and El Salvador in the 1980s? In just ten years from 1976, Australia took over 94,000 refugees from Vietnam. This removed the need to reach our shores by boat. We know the need to escape Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Sri Lanka is great. Why can’t the government negotiate similar arrangements with these countries today and put an end to the political bickering? To send asylum seekers away might help us to shut our conscience. But it does not stop the cry of the poor which will rise towards God and for whom we will be held accountable.

Fr Maurizio Pettena CS



Australia is a wealthy country with one of the smallest numbers of asylum seekers, yet we have now convinced ourselves that creating island gulags to hold innocent men, women and children indefinitely, despite their having committed no crime and faced no court is a “humane” policy.

It will cost this country billions of dollars but the cost to our reputation as a compassionate country that upholds human rights will be far greater. The cost to those who are to be punished for seeking our help will be greatest of all.

Chris Holley, Leichhardt, NSW
Letter to Editor SMH 16/8/12

Voices from Manus Island

Aladdin Sisalem, the Palestinian asylum seeker who was the sole detainee on Manus Island for 10 months in 2004, told ABC on 11 August that he is not surprised by the Federal Government’s approach to PNG. “It would be wrong to reopen the facility. It’s a senseless decision, a very bad decision - bad for people’s life [and] bad for the taxpayers’ money. Mostly it was the fear of what is behind it, what is going to happen next, because I find that I have no human rights at all - anything can happen to me.

I actually do have a mental disability now from the post-traumatic stress and suffering. It’s been so hard to build this life again after that.” *ABC 11/8/12*

I strongly urge that experiences like Aladdin’s should not happen again. To re-open the Manus detention centre would be inhumane and destructive for the health and wellbeing of all involved.

Please leave Manus Island alone if the local people can’t benefit from it.

The very name of **Manus Island** will become linked around the world with persecution and injustice.

*Paul Lonot Sireb priest from Manus Island, PNG,
who is living and working in Sydney*

... and the Cry of the Earth

Opposition to CSG in the Northern Rivers NSW



Gasfields in the Tara region Qld.

Exploration for coal seam gas has been occurring in the Northern Rivers since the early 2000's, with almost the entire region now covered by petroleum exploration licenses and applications. As awareness of the negative impacts of unconventional gas mining overseas has spread, and as we begin to see the rollout of massive coal seam gas fields over the border in

Queensland, opposition to this industry in the region has steadily grown. Across Australia, there has been a mushrooming of community groups that are now active in the fight to protect the land, water and precious natural assets of the region.

There is no such thing as a single gas well. Gasfield industrialisation involves a spider's web of wells, pipes, roads, fences and toxic ponds. It would destroy our rural landscapes. For the next 20 years, thousands of wells would bring vast quantities of salty contaminated water to the surface, release toxic fumes, damage aquifers and surface water systems, and inflict 24hour-a-day noise and light pollution on rural communities.

www.csdfreenorthernrivers.org

ACRATH in Canberra - 20 - 23 August

Last week I joined 14 members of ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious against Trafficking in Humans) for four days of advocacy work on behalf of people who have been trafficked. During this time we had appointments with 94 people, including Members of Federal Parliament or their Advisors and staff from Government Departments. We were well received by all. We spoke to four specific issues.

ACRATH gathered helpful information from these appointments and reassurances of further support for trafficked people. We were delighted to be in Parliament for the passing in the House of Representatives of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like Conditions and People Trafficking) Bill 2012. We were assured that this Bill will go through the Senate. We were particularly pleased to see the forced and



servile marriage aspects of the Bill. ACRATH was mentioned on a number of occasions in the House last week. On Tuesday 21st, Ms Melissa Parke, Federal Member for Fremantle was recorded as saying, "I pay tribute to the work of the NGOs who work tirelessly with and for trafficking victims, including ACRATH with whom I met today and who have been very diligent in raising awareness among parliamentarian and the community". We left Parliament encouraged and resolved to follow up on the four issues that had been raised.

Joan Kennedy pbvm, Victoria



Wonder is not just another emotion;
it is rather an opening into
the heart of the universe.

Wonder is the pathway into
what it means to be human,
to taste the lusciousness of
sun-ripened fruit,
to endure the bleak agonies
of heartbreak,
to exult over the majesty of
existence.

Swimme, Tucker
The Journey of the Universe



Simon Sheik

Simon became National Director of *GetUp!* in September, 2008, at the age of 22, stepping down on 27 July 2012. Membership of *GetUp!* increased from 270,000 to 610,000 during his four year term. *GetUp* works tirelessly for the care of the earth and the rights of victims of injustice especially the rights of refugees and aboriginal people.

**The Mission of IPA is to channel our resources
so that we can speak and act in partnership with others for global justice.**

(IPA 2003/2007)

Reconciliation - There are More Bridges to Cross



Constitutional Recognition



What difference will recognizing us in our nation's Constitution make to the day-to-day disadvantage we face as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

I think it can be the vehicle to increasing and improving our:

- self worth
- our resilience
- our relationship with the broader Australian community; and
- our relationship with governments.



Mick Gooda

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists believe that constitutional change would improve Indigenous mental health. According to the College President, Dr Maria Tomasic:

Recognition in the Constitution would have a positive effect on the self esteem of Indigenous Australians and reinforce their pride in the value of their culture and history. It would make a real difference to the lives of Indigenous Australians.

Despite the fact that Australia is home to the oldest living culture in the world, there is currently no mention of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Constitution. There is no mention of the fact that the history of our country, as opposed to our nation, began many years before British colonisation.

A former Attorney-General has referred to the Constitution as 'our nation's Birth Certificate'. Our nation's birth certificate should represent our full history, our diverse cultures, and the true spirit of our nation. It should reflect our complete genealogy – not just one part of the family tree.

Mick Gooda, *ATSI Social Justice Commissioner*
Darling Harbour 1/7/12

Brisbane Forum: Sovereignty in the 21st Century

Tiger Bayles, MC at this forum, conducted the session in a Q & A format. The Guest Speakers, Lilla Watson and Sam Watson, outlined their views on the Sovereignty of Indigenous peoples in Australia. There was much discussion about the Australian law and the impact on Indigenous peoples since the arrival of the European people in the 18th century.

What stayed with me after the evening are the phrases that

gave me insight into the Aboriginal perception of events and their impact:

Lilla Watson

'We had more than 300 countries, governed by local governments. We didn't have to invent prisons, police.

It's important for Aboriginal people to work on the local level, to take responsibility for their land.'

As a young law clerk, **Sam Watson** was working on land titles. He queried, 'Where is the document that

recorded the transmission of title to the British or Queensland governments?'

In conclusion, Sam and Lilla offered these challenges:

Do you know the name of the Indigenous people where you live?

Do you know their language?

Do you know their sacred places?

Will you be an honourable ancestor?

Peta Anne Molloy pbvm Queensland

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"We acknowledge the original carers of this land, the Bundjalung people, who respected and treated this earth as sacred.

On this our Foundation Day, we acknowledge that our founding Sisters were part of the take-over of this land and the Dislocation of the Aboriginal people in this area. This continued as we expanded our foundations into other areas.

Let us commit ourselves to work for justice and a better future for our indigenous people."

Margaret Cannane pbvm
Lismore Congregation 15/8/12