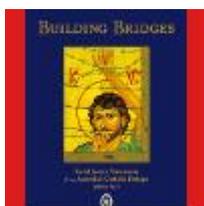




ACSJC Monthly Briefing June 2014 No 157



From the Secretariat, June 2014

ANNOUNCING AN EXCITING NEW RESOURCE

Dear friends,

Australia's Catholic Bishops have just published an important new resource for all who are interested in the social teaching of the Catholic Church.

The resource is the book *Building Bridges: Social Justice Statements from Australia's Catholic Bishops 1988 to 2013*. The title tells you what the book is: a collection of all the Social Justice Statements that Australia's Bishops issued from 1988 to last year. The result is an accessible, attractive book that is a treasure trove for anyone looking for insight into Catholic social teaching, especially (but not only) as applied to the Australian context.

The expression 'Building Bridges', used in the title, has been used by Pope Francis and other popes on a number of occasions. It also recalls the title of the 2011–12 Social Justice Statement.

The 26 Statements in this book are, of course, part of a long tradition of the Church in Australia. Our Bishops have been issuing such Statements since 1940.

In this collection, you will find deeply important words about what the economy is for, about work and unemployment, about poverty here and overseas, and about the gap between rich and poor. The themes of justice for Australia's Indigenous people and for refugees and asylum seekers return again and again. So do themes of peace and violence (in global, national and personal contexts) and care for creation.

One particularly useful feature of the book is the introduction, which is an excellent resource for anyone who wants to explore the Church's teaching on social justice issues. It was written by Sandie Cornish, a former Executive Officer of the ACSJC, who has done a fine job of distilling the major themes from the book and showing how consistently Australia's bishops have addressed them over these 26 years.

As she says:



The Statements promote a vision of God's reign of justice and peace made manifest in the world. It is a vision of love for one another as equally beloved children of the one God. It is a vision of social inclusion, community, solidarity and right relationships.

I believe there is a place for this book on the shelves of anyone who is interested in Catholic social teaching and its deep roots in the Scriptures. I believe that schools and universities will find it indispensable. So will social justice groups and offices at parish and diocesan levels. The book is fully indexed, which makes this an excellent resource for anyone seeking to study what Australia's Catholic bishops have said on critical social justice issues over the years.

You can order this book [here](#).

All of us at the ACSJC hope that it becomes a widely-used resource for the Catholic community in Australia.

David Brennan
Acting National Executive Officer



Current Issues Resources, June 2014

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS MEDIA RELEASES ON ASYLUM SEEKERS:

The Australian Catholic Bishops have made a strong [statement](#) criticising our current national policy towards those seeking asylum, and other parts of the Church have stepped up their work of advocacy in solidarity with those seeking refuge.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PRIESTS MEDIA RELEASES ON ASYLUM SEEKERS:

The National Council of Priests released their own [statement](#) endorsing the Bishop's statement, and drawing from their member's involvement with ministry to asylum seekers.

FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCES OF OCEANIA MEDIA RELEASES ON ASYLUM SEEKERS:

At the recent Assembly General Meeting of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO), they made an 'appeal to the leaders of Papua New Guinea and Australia to ensure that the Regional Resettlement Arrangement between Australia and Papua New Guinea is reviewed'. Read the FCBCO [statement](#).

CARITAS LAUNCH NEW CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

The online educational toolkit is designed to enrich students' understanding of how Catholic Social Teaching (CST) can be enacted in real-life situations and experience. Since the CST



principles are so rich in meaning, this toolkit has been developed for multiple age ranges: Lower Primary, Middle Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary. Download the Toolkit [here](#).

WELCOMING ASYLUM SEEKERS A FOCUS OF ACTION AND OF ADVOCACY

Parishes in Melbourne have been invited to contribute more to the wellbeing of asylum seekers in our community, under a [program](#) launched in May by Catholic Social Services Victoria.

Also of note is the advocacy project coordinated by Jesuit Social Services and Cabrini Health to engage Catholic communities and the broader Australian society in supporting change in community attitudes to asylum seekers. [Click here](#) to support a statement of principles, which is an initial step in this campaign.

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE (ACOSS) MEDIA RELEASE: BUDGET 2014

The Australian Council of Social Service said it was deeply concerned that those in our nation who carry the greatest burden from spending cuts in the Budget are those who can least afford it. 'The Budget divides rather than mends. It entrenches divisions between those with decent incomes, housing and health care and those without them. It undermines the fabric of our social safety net with severe cuts to health, disability support, income support, community services and housing programs, said ACOSS CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie. Read the ACOSS [statement](#).

ST VINCENT DE PAUL MEDIA RELEASE: BUDGET 2014

Dr John Falzon, Chief Executive, St Vincent de Paul Society questioned the intention of the budget saying 'You don't help young people or older people or people with a disability or single mums into jobs by making them poor. You don't build people up by putting them down. And as even the OECD acknowledges, you don't build a strong economy by increasing the level of inequality.' Also Anthony Thornton, National President commented 'Governments must do what markets cannot. We are saddened to see the government walking away from its responsibility to its people.' Read the St Vincent de Paul [statement](#).

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PEOPLES MEDIA RELEASE: BUDGET 2014

The national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative body said that small gains that had been realized needed to be built upon, it was not time to reduce efforts in closing the gap. Disappointed with the news of so many decreases in funding, Kirstie Parker, Co-Chair of the Congress said 'the Budget cut to the COAG Reform Council could be viewed in a similar way to the cut to Congress - a devaluing of independent voices'. [Link](#)

ACT COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE (ACTCOSS) ACT NOW: OPEN LETTER AGAINST CHANGES TO THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT

On 25 March 2014, the Attorney-General George Brandis, released an exposure draft Bill on the proposed amendments to the Racial Discrimination Act 1975. The proposed changes to the Act will reduce the basic protections that all people are entitled to, regardless of their



race. Specifically noteworthy is that if the Act is changed, under law it will no longer be an offence to ‘offend, insult or humiliate’ someone because of their race or ethnicity. This means that the targets of racial slurs will in future have very limited legal recourse. The proposed changes have resulted in public outcry, with organisations and individuals calling on the Federal Government to keep the Act the way it is. ACTCOSS encourages people get behind the movement calling on the Government to leave the Racial Discrimination Act as it stands. Sign and send the [open letter](#) against changes to the Racial Discrimination Act to the Attorney General George Brandis and your local member.

REPORT FINDS DEEP DISADVANTAGE AMONG SYDNEY FAMILIES

ANGLICARE Sydney’s 6th annual State of Sydney Report draws on nearly seven years of data from the organisation’s Emergency Relief Centres across Sydney and the Illawarra. The Report is titled *Locked Out: Deep & Persistent Disadvantage in Sydney*. This new research has revealed deep and persistent disadvantage for low income households in Sydney and the Illawarra at a time when the Federal budget looks set to hit hardest those on the margins. Among the report’s findings are: 2 out of 3 households were trying to live on less than \$500 per week; Almost 1 in 10 families with children were living in squats, refuges, cars, on the street or other insecure accommodation; 1 in 4 households had someone with a disability; and Aboriginal people were significantly over represented – 6 times the national average. For more information, [click here](#).

MEDIA RELEASE: STATE GOVERNMENTS OPPOSE CHANGES TO THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT

The NSW and Victorian Governments announced they had lodged formal submissions opposing changes to the protections against racial vilification contained in the Federal Racial Discrimination Act 1975. NSW Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello and Victorian Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Matthew Guy said: ‘We consider it vital that the Commonwealth does not weaken protections in place against racial vilification. The proposed changes threaten the social cohesion and well-being of not just our states’ culturally and religiously diverse communities, but also the wider Australian community. We support the protections currently in place under the Federal Racial Discrimination Act and emphasise the practical and symbolic importance of these protections – particularly for our Aboriginal, multicultural and multi-faith communities.’ Read the full [Media release](#).

REFUGEE CONCERNS RAISED IN RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT SUBMISSION

RCOA’s submission to Australia’s Attorney-General on proposed amendments to the Racial Discrimination Act have raised fears expressed by Australians of refugee background of increased racism and abuse. The submission argued that the proposed amendments would weaken protection against racism, racial vilification and discrimination towards refugee communities. Informed by consultations RCOA held with Australians of refugee background who shared many experiences of racism at work, in public places, on public transport and in social activities such as sporting clubs, the submission noted that many people were afraid to go out in public and had suffered verbal abuse which had caused some to withdraw from sporting clubs and social activities. Read the media release [here](#) and the full submission [here](#).



NEW PUBLICATION - WORKING AUSTRALIA, 2014: WAGES, FAMILIES AND POVERTY

‘The Australian wages safety net is failing to keep workers and their families out of poverty and provide them with an appropriate standard of living’, the Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations ([ACCER](#)) said. The ACCER published a free e-book today ‘Working Australia, 2014: wages, families and poverty’. “The e-book highlights that the real debate in wage setting is not about whether workers should be protected against poverty, they should, but how to identify and use the evidence to close the gap,” Greg Crafter AO, Chair of the National Catholic Education Commission said. ‘It is a great resource for parish and Catholic school-based groups that are interested in the way in which Catholic social teaching can be applied in the real world’, he added. Download the e-book [here](#).

MEDIA RELEASE: CATHOLIC CHURCH CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO REINSTATE IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The Government announced that asylum seekers, who arrive in Australia by boat or air, would no longer have access to the Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS). The Catholic Church in Australia is calling on the Federal Government to reinstate funding for IAAAS. ‘Despite a worldwide increase in the number of applications for asylum, due to the ongoing and devastating Syrian humanitarian crisis, the Government continues to show contempt for the basic human rights of asylum seekers,’ said Bishops’ Delegate for Migrants and Refugees, Bishop Gerard Hanna. Read the full media release on the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference [website](#).

ASYLUM SEEKERS CENTRE NEW WEBSITE

The new site has been designed to provide information for asylum seekers as well as their supporters, partners and volunteers. It is easy to navigate and the information is clear, while still reflecting the Asylum Seekers Centre’s commitment and passion to support asylum seekers through the difficult process of rebuilding their lives. Visit the new Asylum Seekers Centre [website](#).

RESOURCE: I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU WELCOMED ME

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) has produced a resource for people who want to know more about the Church’s teaching on asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. The leaflet, titled ‘I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me’ (from Matthew 25:35), deals briefly with issues including the numbers of refugees worldwide; the right to seek asylum; dignity, humanity, justice and mercy; and what scripture and Church teaching tell us about what we need to do as individuals and as a nation to ‘heal a global wound’. See the ACMRO [website](#).

WELCOME TO MY PLACE FOR DINNER

‘For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home.’ — Matthew 25:35

This is an opportunity for Australian Christians, compelled by the love of Christ, to show hospitality to asylum seekers and refugees during Refugee Week, 15-21 June 2014. Right



now the church has the opportunity to rise up and show the tangible love of Christ to those fleeing the trauma of conflict, crisis and poverty in their birthplace to face uncertain futures here in Australia. [Find out](#) how to run a Welcome to My Place for Dinner in your home or church.

NATIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY NETWORK.

NEEN is a national initiative to promote open learning and collaboration amongst faith-based and not-for-profit community organisations to achieve energy savings and a positive energy future. Social services organisations, churches and parishes, kindergartens, aged care organisations, not-for-profit agencies and religious congregations are welcome to register for NEEN. For more information, visit the NEEN [website](#) or the NEEN [Facebook page](#). This includes a number of ideas and opportunities for grants.

2014 GLOBAL PEACE INDEX LAUNCH

The Global Peace Index report will be launched on the 18th of June, it will focus on identifying countries most at risk of instability and conflict; it will explore the institutions that underpin peaceful societies, and look at the link between conflict risk, resilience and peacebuilding institutions. Launch events will be held in New York, Washington, London, Brussels, Berlin, Geneva, and the Hague. [Read more](#) about the Global Peace Index.



ACSJC Publications

(Orders: phone (02) 8306 3499 or download an order form from the ACSJC website that can be faxed to (02) 8306 3498:

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/publications/order-forms>)

NEW PUBLICATION – BUILDING BRIDGES

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has issued the collected Social Justice Statements issued by Australia's Bishops between 1988 and 2013. The ACSJC is now taking orders for this publication.

The book, *Building Bridges: Social Justice Statements from Australia's Bishops 1988 to 2013*, brings these Statements together in an attractive and readable format. It offers an invaluable insight into Catholic social teaching brought to life in an Australian context over the past 26 years. This collection is a vital resource for anyone interested in the Church's teaching on justice. It is of special interest to schools and universities and to parish and diocesan groups. The publication is fully indexed, making this an exceptional resource for education and research.

Building Bridges is available from the ACSJC for \$35.00 per copy including postage anywhere in Australia. Order forms are available on the ACSJC's [website](#)

PASTORAL LETTER – FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER 2014



The Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker for 2014 is entitled *Putting People First: The call for an economy of social inclusion*. It is available for download in regular and 'three-column' versions [here](#).

DISCUSSION GUIDE: 2014 WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE

The theme for the 47th World Day of Peace Message from Pope Francis is *Fraternity: the Foundation and Pathway to Peace*. In this his first World Day of Peace message, Pope Francis expresses his wish for everyone to live a life filled with joy and hope, in fraternity that helps us 'look upon and treat each person as a true sister or brother'. The ACSJC has prepared a Discussion Guide for the papal message, which is available on our [website](#).

SERIES PAPER 75 – 'JUSTICE IN THE NAME OF GOD'

Time and again in the Bible we come across the concepts of 'name' and 'word'. People of our time hear and read these concepts so often in Scripture and in the liturgy that it is very easy not to ask what their deeper meaning is. In part, this is because in today's society, 'word' and 'name' do not have the significance they had for the ancient peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean. For them, the name of God went with the idea of justice, and the prophets, in taking up the call to justice, did so in God's name: the two are inseparable. In the Gospel of John, the Incarnation is described in a profound way: the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Author Gerard Moore describes this paper as 'an attempt to revisit the theology of God as a God of justice' and asks: 'Where does justice fit as we contemplate the nature of God?' This paper surveys the prophets as messengers of God's ideal of justice and shows how this mission culminates in the mission of Jesus himself. Available [here](#).

SERIES PAPER 74 – 'TIME TO DRAW THE LINE: FINDING A JUST SETTLEMENT BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND TIMOR-LESTE'

Beneath the Timor Sea vast deposits of oil and gas lie between Australia, Timor-Leste and Indonesia. Who has a just claim to those resources? What does international law say about them? What are Australians' obligations as citizens of the world? What can we learn from the teaching of Christ and his Church as we grapple with these questions? Fr Frank Brennan tries to outline some answers to these questions in this Series paper, a sequel to his 2004 paper 'The Timor Sea's Oil and Gas: What's Fair?' He writes: 'This paper attempts to explain the issue so that Australians of good will can reach a conclusion about the best way forward for any Australian government committed to justice, transparency and good neighbourly behaviour.' Frank Brennan sets out the facts calmly and clearly and points us towards some ways forward. Available [here](#). (Catholic Social Justice Series papers: \$7.50 a copy, including postage)



News Monitor

[ACMRO calls for review of Manus Island detention policy](#)

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office called on the Australian Government to reconsider its policy of resettling refugees on Manus Island.

[Francis thanks Jordan for taking in refugees](#)



At the start of his Holy Land trip, Pope Francis thanked Jordan for hosting many of the refugees from conflicts in the Middle-East, reported *The Tablet*.

[More help needed for victims of climate change, says Vatican](#)

World leaders need to look beyond the scientific and economic consequences of climate change to the people who will be most affected by rising temperatures, according to a Vatican official, reported the Catholic News Service.

[Welfare advocates give qualified support for GST reform](#)

Social justice advocate Father Frank Brennan SJ backed a call to broaden the tax base to fix problems in government budgets, but wanted GST exemptions to remain for certain essentials.

[Budget slides Australia down generosity ranking](#)

At a time when Australian investment in Africa is booming, the Budget decision to divest the poorest communities was more than perplexing, wrote Paul O'Callaghan, CEO of Caritas Australia, in *Eureka Street*.

[Nuns to fight human trafficking and prostitution at World Cup](#)

An international association of Catholic nuns launched a public awareness campaign to combat human trafficking and prostitution during the World Cup in Brazil, reported Sky News.

[ACRATH labels foreign aid cuts 'a national disgrace'](#)

The national projects coordinator of Australian Catholic Religious Against trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) described the Budget's cuts to foreign aid as a 'national disgrace', reported *The Guardian Australia*.

[Vic parents say federal Budget hampers parental choice](#)

The Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB) was concerned that the the federal Budget would impact low-income and disadvantaged families.

[Pregnant Sudanese facing death for her faith](#)

A heavily pregnant Sudanese woman was facing the death penalty for allegedly converting from Islam to Christianity, reported *The Catholic Herald*.

[Vatican official speaks out against automated weapons](#)

No matter how sophisticated a drone is, autonomous weapons systems could never comply with international human rights law, according to a Vatican official, the Catholic News Service reported.

[Can Francis help the UN get back on course?](#)



The United Nations bureaucracy tends to regard religious traditions as an obstacle to the international enforcement of human rights, said *The Catholic Herald* in an editorial.

[Catholic groups criticise Budget](#)

The Federal Budget's widespread cuts to welfare, health, education and foreign aid have drawn sharp criticism from key national and state Catholic agencies, reported *The Catholic Leader*.

[ACBC says asylum-seeker policy is cruel](#)

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference labelled the Federal Government current policy on asylum-seekers as cruel and called on the government to respect their rights.

[Pope calls for 'worldwide ethical mobilisation'](#)

In a meeting with top United Nations officials, Pope Francis called for a 'worldwide ethical mobilisation', reported the Catholic News Service.

[Church 'appalled' by Cambodia refugee resettlement plan](#)

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) said it was appalled that the Australian Government was considering a policy of resettling refugees in Cambodia.

For details click on headlines or go to cathnews.com



Social Justice Diary, June 2014

1	Sun	The Ascension Week of Prayer for Christian Unity World Communications Day . Theme: 'Communication at the service of an authentic culture of encounter'. (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Resources: Stirring Hearts)
2	Mon	
3	Tue	Day of Prayer for Catholic and Anglican Reconciliation 1886: Catholic and Anglican Martyrs of Uganda 1992: High Court hands down decision in Mabo Case (ACSJC resources on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders)



4	Wed	International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression 1989: Tiananmen Square Massacre
5	Thu	World Environment Day: World Environment Day has been observed on 5 June since 1973. Its aims are: READ MORE ↓
6	Fri	
7	Sat	
8	Sun	Pentecost Sunday World Oceans Day (ACSJC resources on the environment)
9	Mon	
10	Tue	1838: Myall Creek Massacre (ACSJC resources on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) 1935: Alcoholics Anonymous established in New York
11	Wed	1971: Neville Bonner became first Aboriginal Australian to hold a seat in Federal Parliament (ACSJC resources on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) 1975: Australia ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. (ACSJC resources on Confronting Racism)
12	Thu	World Day Against Child Labour 1988: Barunga Statement presented to Prime Minister Bob Hawke by Aboriginal leaders (ACSJC resources on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders)
13	Fri	
14	Sat	
15	Sun	Trinity Sunday National Refugee Week commences. (ACSJC resources on Refugees)
16	Mon	International Day of the African Child
17	Tue	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
18	Wed	



19	Thu	1945: Birth of Aung San Suu Kyi 1969: Arbitration Commission affirmed principle of equal pay for women performing equal work
20	Fri	<u>World Refugee Day:</u> <i>By the end of 2012, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide exceeded 45 million, the highest level of displacement since 1994. These are men, women and children driven from their homes by war or civil violence.</i> READ MORE ↓
21	Sat	
22	Sun	Corpus Christi (The Body and Blood of Christ) 1989: Destruction of the Berlin Wall
23	Mon	<u>Public Service Day</u>
24	Tue	
25	Wed	
26	Thu	<u>International Day in Support of Victims of Torture</u> <u>International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking</u>
27	Fri	
28	Sat	
29	Sun	Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles <u>Ramadan</u> begins: Ramadan (also known as Ramadhan or Ramzan) is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. It is a period of prayer, fasting, charity-giving and self-accountability for Muslims in Australia. The first verses of the Koran (Qu'ran) were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad during Ramadan, making this an especially holy period.
30	Mon	1945: Introduction of unemployment benefits in Australia. (<u>ACSJC resources on Social Security</u>)

