



ACSJC Monthly Briefing September 2014 No 160



From the Secretariat September 2014

Dear friends,

At about the time that you are receiving this Briefing, a soccer match will be under way in the Olympic Stadium in Rome. That is not remarkable in itself, but this one is being played at the instigation of Pope Francis. According to Zenit News Agency:

‘The Interreligious Match for Peace will feature current and past players representing different cultures and religions: Buddhist, Christian (Catholic and Protestant), Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Shinto.’

The idea of promoting peace and education through sport is one that appeals strongly to Pope Francis. As the Zenit report says, he has encouraged an initiative that brings schools and colleges together with the aim of bringing education to the poorest in societies across the world.

This initiative and the Pope’s enthusiastic support for it are strong reminders of the message of this year’s Social Justice Statement from Australia’s Catholic bishops, which will be launched on 17 September. In it, the Bishops speak about sport’s transformative nature and its capacity to lead us towards justice and peace. In the words of Nelson Mandela, sport ‘has the power to unite people in a way that little else does ... Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand.’

That is not to say that sport is some magical force that automatically dissipates conflict and violence. Too often, sadly, we see the opposite – competitors or supporters resorting to violence or abuse, even towards their own side. Yet at its best, and often against our worst expectations, sport can bring us a message of hope.

In Brisbane, some young Afghan men formed a soccer team and began to play in a Christian church competition. On tour in regional Queensland, the team has met and played locals and did a great deal to break down suspicion and fear in places where hardly anyone had met a refugee.



There is a short and moving [video](#) in which one of the young Afghans, Zia, talks about his experiences as a player and as a refugee. The team, he says, is named ‘Tiger 11’ for a reason: ‘Because we are not afraid of anything’. Yet in the past they had good reason to be afraid: the Taliban forbade sport and dealt ferociously with anyone who played or practised. When he finally made it to Australia, Zia was placed in detention and his first game of soccer was behind barbed wire.

For Zia and his teammates the team is a chance to share their problems and form bonds of solidarity and friendship. ‘Playing soccer keeps us together’, he says. Few of them have been able to make contact with their families since they left home.

The Tiger 11, which is still playing in Brisbane, is not the only team that offers support and solidarity for young people of refugee background. Peter Arndt of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission in the Brisbane Archdiocese tells us that there is at least one cricket team made up of Tamil refugees.

Here young people on the margins of the community have an opportunity to interact with the wider society around them and to support and validate each other. They seize the hope that sport offers of a chance for acceptance and simple joy in movement and skill. These initiatives are little examples of the sort of result Pope Francis is hoping for in his match on 1 September. And this is just one of the themes that Australia’s bishops have addressed in their reflection on the place of sport in our society and its potential to carry joy and light into our society and the wider world.

The Australian Bishops’ Social Justice Statement, *A Crown for Australia: Striving for the best in our sporting nation*, will be launched on 17 September at St Mary’s Cathedral in Sydney. The speakers will be Kevin Sheedy, legendary AFL player and coach and redoubtable supporter of Indigenous players, and Geraldine Doogue, well-known journalist and commentator. We know that it will be a marvellous occasion.

John Ferguson

National Executive Officer

You can order the 2014–2015 Social Justice Statement, *A Crown for Australia: Striving for the best in our sporting nation*, on the [ACSJJC website](#) or by ringing (02) 8306 3499.



Current Current Issues / Resources September 2014

ONLINE PETITION – PUT AN END TO OFFSHORE DETENTION

Our Government is failing to ensure even the most basic standard of care for people in the Manus Island and Nauru detention centres. Join the campaign calling on Immigration Minister Scott Morrison to put an end to this disgraceful policy, which is fast-becoming our nation's greatest shame. The petition to close down the Manus Island and Nauru detention centres is a collaboration between GetUp, the Refugee Action Coalition, Doctors for Refugees, ChilOut, the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, and numerous groups and



individuals fighting for compassionate and humane treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

What can you do? 1) Sign the petition [here](#); 2) Add the petition to your facebook page or twitter account; 3) Distribute the link to the petition to your own email list, and encourage others to sign and distribute. If you would like to sign on to the petition as an organisation or group, please email: petition@getup.org.au

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS – GRAVE CONCERN & CALL TO PRAYER FOR IRAQ

Australia's Catholic bishops have expressed grave concern at the humanitarian crisis that is continuing to worsen in Northern Iraq. They condemn outright the use of terrorism in the name of religion. 'Tens of thousands of Christians have been forced to flee Mosul, Qaraqosh and other areas of Northern Iraq, with demands by Islamic State fighters that they convert to Islam or die. The Yazidis, other Muslim, religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq, have also been forced to flee from forces of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Evil is a word often overused, but in recent weeks we have seen and heard reports of actions that are truly evil,' the Bishops say. 'We ask that Catholic parishioners throughout Australia pray for the Iraqi people this weekend, giving thanks for their great faith and asking God to protect and watch over them. The best outcome for the Christians and Yazidis of Iraq is peace and security, so they can return to their homes. But if this is not possible, the Australian Government [should agree](#) to offer safe haven to many of these displaced people so they can try to rebuild their shattered lives.'

VOICE OF THE MARTYRS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

Persecuted Christians around the world desperately need your prayers. Will you commit to pray for them? Every year, Christians around the world gather on the first Sunday of November to pray for the persecuted Church. As Victoria and fellow believers at the Deeper Life Church in Gombe, Nigeria, prayed together for the persecuted church, they couldn't have imagined how soon they would be persecuted themselves. But at that very moment, gunmen opened fire in the church, killing Victoria's father and younger brother. Yet Victoria's hope in Christ shone as she spoke of her father, declaring: 'He is not dead. Definitely one day we are going to meet again.' Join the Christians in Gombe and others around the world as we unite in prayer for the persecuted on Sunday 2 November, the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Resources are available on the Voice of the Martyrs [website](#).

OPEN DOORS YOUTH HOPE MOVEMENT – 4 WAYS YOU CAN HELP IRAQ

When we turn on our TV sets or scroll through our Facebook feed, we are bombarded with images of pain and suffering from around the world. In recent weeks, the persecution of Christians, the Yazidi people, and many others under the extremist group IS (formerly ISIS) in Iraq, has come to light. When we see the vast extent of the tragedy and injustice that's occurring, we can feel helpless. It is important we know it's okay to feel deeply when we see these images; but we don't have to feel powerless, and there are some things we can all do right now to make a difference for our brothers and sisters in the Middle East. Our friends at Open Doors Youth have put together [these 4 tips](#) that we can take action with.



WALK FREE IRAQ ANTI-SLAVERY CAMPAIGN

‘She said she is going to be sold as a slave this afternoon, for \$10. What can a father say to that? How can I help? We all feel so useless.’ Can you imagine hearing news like this? This is the phone call that Khandhar Kaliph received from his daughter last week. He has been despairing over the safety of his child ever since -- and shockingly, this is not an isolated case. The latest reports are that as many as 3,000 women and children fleeing religious persecution in Iraq have been captured and may be at risk of modern slavery. If you have been watching the news unfolding in Iraq like us you’ve probably wondered: what can I do? One thing you can do right now is demand justice for Khandhar’s daughter and others like her. Call for immediate action by the International Criminal Court to uphold the rights of those at risk of modern slavery in Iraq. Sign the Petition [here](#).

ACL MEDIA RELEASE: ACL URGES SOLIDARITY WITH CHRISTIANS SUFFERING UNDER IS ‘CONVERT OR DIE’ REGIME

ACL Managing Director Lyle Shelton said while it was understandable that political leaders had their focus elsewhere, he urged them not to forget the plight of Christians who were being forced to convert to Islam, pay a protection tax, or face death. ‘The Christians being persecuted in places like Mosul have been there for nearly 2000 years and are considered indigenous peoples to the area.’ Reports of Christian houses and possessions being marked with the Arabic letter N for Nasrani or Nazarene, had chilling echoes of the holocaust. Read the [media release](#).

A petition is being circulated urging the Australian Government to raise the plight of persecuted Christians at the G20 Summit in Brisbane and at the UN Security Council, where Australia is a non-permanent member. You can sign the petition [here](#).

TREATY VIDEO LAUNCH

Aboriginal Peoples have waited more than 200 years for formal and binding agreements with the Australian Government. They want the opportunity to take control over their lives and to determine their futures through legal agreements, compacts, covenants or treaties established in law and enforceable through the courts. Please take time to watch this 8 minute [You-Tube](#).

RUGBY LEAGUE HELPS CLOSE THE GAP

The National Rugby League (NRL) was the first sporting code to support the Close the Gap (CTG) campaign. In 2010, the National Rugby League held its first ‘Close the Gap Round’. Since then the annual NRL CTG Round has reached between 2.5 and 3.5 million Australians. The NRL’s involvement in the Close the Gap campaign came at the urging of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players. Although Indigenous Australians make up less than 3% of the population, they make up more than 12% of the 2014 NRL player-list. [Find out about](#) the NRL’s programs to improve Indigenous health.

BEYONDBLUE STOP THINK RESPECT CAMPAIGN

Beyondblue has launched a new campaign to highlight the effects racism has on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their everyday lives. This comes as new research shows Indigenous people still face widespread racism from other Australians, including negative



stereotypes and ‘casual’ racism. The Stop Think Respect campaign centres on TV ads showing non-Indigenous Australians engaging in subtly racist acts, such as treating Indigenous Australians with suspicion. [Find out more](#) about the campaign.

RECOGNISE RELAY

The Recognise relay set off again on its journey across Australia, making its way north across the Atherton Tablelands and up the Cape York Peninsula. The relay gives communities across the nation a chance to be part of the movement to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia’s Constitution – and to ensure there is no place for racial discrimination in it. [Find out more](#) about the Journey to Recognition.

CARITAS: 50 YEARS IN FILM

Meet the people and hear the stories that have made Caritas who they are today. To mark 50 years, they have produced eight stunning videos celebrating the journey of love and compassion. At the 50 Year video page you can view videos from regions and countries, from First Australian programs, to Southeast Asia, Africa, East Timor, the Pacific, South Asia and Latin America. A longer main video, 50 years of solidarity, [provides an overview](#) of the fifty year journey.

REFUGEE WELCOME ZONES

A Refugee Welcome Zone is a Local Government Area which has made a commitment in spirit to welcoming refugees into the community, upholding the human rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in the community. The majority of Refugee Welcome Zones have been declared after an initial proposal by a community or church-based organisation that is subsequently supported by an approach from RCOA. If you would like your local Council or Shire to become a Refugee Welcome Zone, here are some suggested steps on the Refugee Council of Australia [website](#).

ASYLUM SEEKERS RESOURCE CENTRE (ASRC) – WHAT YOU CAN DO

With the political environment so hostile to asylum seekers, ASRC have been getting a lot of requests from people asking what they can do to help. One of the best things you can do is to exercise a fundamental democratic right and write to your Federal MP, holding them to account for the measures they are keeping in place in your name. ASRC’s patron, Julian Burnside, has observed that many of our Federal politicians do not know the facts about our refugee policy and have not confronted the moral issues it raises. You can find who your relevant MP is [here](#). Most have a contact button next to their names, which will email them through a standard form. Julian suggests that a handwritten letter is more likely to get attention: you can find the address of their local office in the List of Members [here](#). To help you know what to write, there is a one page tip sheet on Julian’s [website](#) for how to best get your message through.

JOINT SECTOR STATEMENT ON BUDGET SOCIAL SECURITY CHANGES

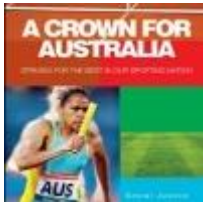
The Australian Council of Social Service has released a statement signed by more than 100 community organisations from around the country expressing serious concerns about unfair budget measures, and urged parliament to reject the proposals outright. Among the budget



measures are: the withdrawal of income support for six months of the year for young people looking for work; the transfer of 22-24 year olds from the Newstart payment to the lower Youth Allowance; reduced indexation of pension payments; and reduced assistance to low income families, including sole parent families, through changes to family payments. To read the statement in full and access factsheets and other useful resources, [click here](#).

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH NSW

This is part of a national mental health promotion campaign held throughout October each year. The timing of the campaign centres on 10 October, World Mental Health Day. It's never too early to start planning for events in your community to raise awareness of mental health, wellbeing and celebrating the uniqueness that shapes your community. There are free resources available including small grants, posters, postcards, event register, balloons and stress less tips, etc. on the Mental Health NSW [website](#).



ACSJC Publications September 2014

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2014–2015 – ORDER NOW!

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement is entitled 'A Crown for Australia: Striving for the best in our sporting nation'. The ACSJC is now taking orders for the Statement. An order form, letter from the President of the Bishops Conference and summary material are available [here](#).

Prayer Card & Leaflet: Ten Steps Towards Being a Good Sport.

Now available. Call (02) 8306 3499

Social Justice Statement Summary, Liturgy Notes, Community and Student Resources, PowerPoint Presentation – available soon at the ACSJC [website](#).

Ecumenical resource: 'Gambling and its Impact in Australia – Is nothing sacred?'
Download from the National Council of Churches [website](#).

BUILDING BRIDGES

The book, *Building Bridges: Social Justice Statements from Australia's Bishops 1988 to 2013*, brings these Statements together in an attractive and readable format. The publication is fully indexed, making this an exceptional resource for education and research. 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.

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



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 [here](#).

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](#).

(Catholic Social Justice Series papers: \$7.50 a copy, including postage)



News Monitor September 2014

[Church workers say hunger in Africa spreading due to Ebola](#)

Hunger and panic were spreading among people unable to work because of restrictions aimed at containing the spread of Ebola in Liberia and Sierra Leone, say Church workers in West Africa.

[Australian bishops voice grave concern about crisis in Iraq](#)

Australia’s Catholic bishops expressed grave concern at the humanitarian crisis that was continuing to worsen in Northern Iraq, saying they condemned outright the use of terrorism in the name of religion.

[Francis will bless Tamils in Sri Lanka visit](#)

Pope Francis was set to become the first pope to set foot in Sri Lanka’s northern Tamil territory, amid accusations of ill treatment there by the country’s Singalese majority.

[Francis gestures hint at comeback for liberation theology](#)

The Economist suggested liberation theology, which sought to combine Catholicism with revolutionary socialism, was making a comeback under Pope Francis, with at least two gestures this month that pointing to this conclusion.

[When does silence over asylum seekers become complicity?](#)



There is a case for urgent, humane and long term solutions for refugee processing, highlighting the appalling conditions of refugees and asylum seekers, especially the suffering of children in detention centres, wrote Redemptorist Fr Bruce Duncan.

[Former Sydney student to head Pacific Islands forum](#)

Dame Meg Taylor, a former student of St Scholastica's College, Glebe, in Sydney, was appointed Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum and is the first woman to be selected for this leadership role.

[Josephite arrested in Hockey office protest](#)

A Josephite sister was among the praying protesters who were arrested at federal Treasurer Joe Hockey's electorate office in Sydney.

[Clwere Condon speaks at Human Rights Commission](#)

Sister Clare Condon SGS spoke at the Australian Human Rights Commission in Sydney on 13 August.

[Cath Social Services calls for social safety net](#)

Catholic Social Services Australia was among a group of Church organisations calling for the government's welfare reforms to include a social safety net strong enough to support every person in need.

– more at cathnews.com



Social Justice Diary Sep 2014

September 2014

		National Landcare Week commences (ACSJC resources on the Environment) National Wattle Day Biodiversity Month:
1	Mon	September is Biodiversity Month , which promotes the importance of protecting, conserving and improving biodiversity in Australia and around the world. Biodiversity encompasses every living thing that exists on our planet and the environment in which they live. All life – including human life – depends on the health and diversity of the ecosystem that has grown up on our planet. 1815: Sisters of Charity founded by Mary Aikenhead



2	Tue	1991: Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act passed by Parliament (ACSJC resources on the Justice for Indigenous People and Reconciliation)
3	Wed	
4	Thu	
5	Fri	<p>International Day of Charity 1997: Death of Mother Teresa of Calcutta 2013: The Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers came into force:</p> <p>It is estimated that there are 50–100 million domestic workers in the world – mainly girls and women, employed to do tasks such as cooking, cleaning and caring for children or elderly people. Workers like these are often poor and are living outside their home country.</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p>
6	Sat	
7	Sun	<p>Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Father's Day</p> <p>National Child Protection Week National Threatened Species Day:</p> <p>National Threatened Species Day is observed on 7 September each year – commemorating the death of the last Tasmanian tiger at Hobart Zoo in 1936.</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p> <p>1936: Death in Hobart Zoo of last Tasmanian tiger in captivity 2013: Nova Peris became the first Indigenous woman elected to Federal Parliament</p>
8	Mon	International Literacy Day
9	Tue	
10	Wed	World Suicide Prevention Day
11	Thu	2001: Terrorist attacks on World Trade Centre, New York and Washington DC



12	Fri	1977: Death of anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko
13	Sat	2007: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by UN
14	Sun	The Exaltation of the Holy Cross Child Protection Sunday 1981: Pope John Paul II's encyclical Laborem Exercens ('On Human Work')
15	Mon	International Day of Democracy
16	Tue	International Day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer
17	Wed	
18	Thu	1961: Death of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld
19	Fri	
20	Sat	
21	Sun	Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time International Day of Peace (ACSJC resources on Peacebuilding)
22	Mon	
23	Tue	1959: Australian Consumers Association launched
24	Wed	
25	Thu	Rosh ha-Shanah (Jewish New Year) World Maritime Day: At an international conference in Geneva in 1948, a convention was adopted that formally established the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). This is the United Nations agency with special responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships. READ MORE ↓
26	Fri	



27	Sat	St Vincent de Paul 1988: Formation of Burma’s National League for Democracy by Aung San Suu Kyi
28	Sun	<p>Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time <u>Social Justice Sunday:</u></p> <p>For the Social Justice Statement for 2014–2015, Australia’s Catholic bishops have selected the theme <i>Sport and Modern Society</i>.</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p> <p>1983: Death of John Pat in Roeburne Prison WA, prompting the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody</p>
29	Mon	
30	Tue	1975: Australia’s Racial Discrimination Act proclaimed

