

ACSJC Monthly Briefing September 2016 No 182



From the Secretariat September 2016

Dear Friends,

As Social Justice Sunday approaches, now is the time to place your orders for the Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement. Parishes, schools and groups can order printed copies (minimum of 10) from the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council. The order form can be found on the ACSJC [website](#).

Social Justice Sunday is celebrated on 25 September. The title of this year's Social Justice Statement is 'A Place at the Table: Social justice in an ageing society'.

In his foreword to the Statement, Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen, Chairman of the ACSJC, reflects on the journey into old age that presents both challenges and opportunities.

'Retirement, changing health and altered living conditions can be confronting for individuals and their families. Our society, too, needs to adjust as it deals with a community with an increasingly higher proportion of older people and comparatively fewer people of working age. However, these changes bring gifts too, and this is the time for families, communities and society as a whole to explore them. In the words of Pope Francis, old age is a vocation, not a time to "pull in the oars", but "our societies are not ready, spiritually and morally, to appreciate the true value of this stage of life".

'We are seeing a new vision of ageing, one where many people enter their 60s and 70s in good health and with plenty of skills and energy to offer our communities. Indeed, governments have seen this change and have started calling for people to remain in the workplace beyond the traditional retirement age. For many, that is a realistic expectation; but for it to be realised, governments and employers must recognise the true capacities of older people. They must also acknowledge that not all older people are healthy or well-off.

'Old age and frailty will come to us all eventually, and we will need the help and support of others. This is a time when we must see a just society in action. We must challenge the individualism and consumerism of modern society that gives rise to what Pope Francis calls a "throw-away" culture. Stereotypes of older people as doddering, out of touch or dependent are false and dehumanising.

'People are not commodities, to be valued only for their productivity or purchasing power. They are human beings in the fullest sense, precious in their own right, possessing a dignity that was given them by God. Furthermore, their wisdom and lived experience are priceless treasures that can enrich our lives.'

Australia faces a threefold challenge: to work for an inclusive society that brings older people into the heart of the community; to ensure the dignity and care of people who are frail and most vulnerable to neglect or abuse; and to foster solidarity among all generations, recognising the special affinity that exists between young and old.

Bishop Long says, 'We must never forget that the older person before us is a spouse, a parent, a brother or sister, a friend, and most importantly, a son or daughter of God. All of us are created in the image and likeness of God, and are called to have our rightful place at the table He has prepared.'

The fundamental concern for the dignity of the person and the imperative of social justice in an ageing society are captured in the opening words of the Statement – taken from Pope Francis' recent Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family: 'Just as God asks us to be his means of hearing the cry of the poor, so too he wants us to hear the cry of the elderly.'

Order forms, associated resources and information about the Social Justice Statement can be found on the ACSJC [website](#).

Here is an entry for your parish bulletin or school newsletter:

We celebrate Social Justice Sunday on 25 September. This year, the Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement is titled: 'A Place at the Table: Social justice in an ageing society'.

The Statement celebrates the value and dignity of older people in Australian life. It challenges us to recognise their significant contribution to society and emphasises that this contribution should not be valued in mere economic terms. The Statement calls for justice for those who are most vulnerable and warns about a view of older people as burdensome or dispensable.

For further details about the Social Justice Statement, visit the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au) or call (02) 8306 3499.

I am grateful for any of efforts of your part to promote this Statement and the celebration of Social Justice Sunday on 25 September.

John Ferguson
National Executive Officer



Current Issues/Resources September 2016

AHRC REPORT: WILLING TO WORK

The right to work is a fundamental human right, but one that far too many older people. Earlier this year, the Age and Disability Discrimination Commissioner, the Hon. Susan Ryan AO, released the report 'Willing to Work' as the outcome of a National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination against Older Australians and Australians with Disability. The Inquiry examined practices, attitudes and Commonwealth laws that deny or diminish equal participation and makes recommendations as to Commonwealth laws that should be made or amended, and action that should be taken to address employment discrimination against older Australians and Australians with disability. The Inquiry consulted widely and bases its findings on the evidence heard as well as research, statistics and reports. The Report also includes case studies and showcases examples of good practice in recruitment, retention and workplace adjustments. Access the report [here](#).

NATIONAL SENIORS AUSTRALIA REPORT: GRANDPARENT CHILDCARE

In 2015, Myra Hamilton and Bridget Jenkins of National Seniors Australia and the Social Policy Research

Centre issued the report, 'Grandparent carers and labour market participation in Australia'. The study explores the intersection between grandparents' childcare provision and their labour market and retirement decisions. In the context of an ageing population and the associated challenges this will pose, there is growing policy emphasis on keeping mature-age Australians engaged in the labour market. At the same time, many Australian grandparents are taking on considerable caring responsibilities for their grandchildren. The report can be accessed [here](#).

PER CAPITA AUSTRALIA REPORTS ON AGEING

In 2014, Per Capita Australia Limited released a 'Blueprint for an Ageing Australia'. The blueprint reveals the challenge to create a society that embraces positively the economic and social impact of ageing and sets out the steps that must be taken now to ensure that ageing is an asset, not a liability. In 2015, Emily Millane produced the report 'The Head, The Heart & The House', which considers issues of health, community care and quality of life. The paper shows how homes are more than bricks and mortar; it is only when we understand this that we can develop policies around housing for later life. The report can be accessed [here](#).

DISCUSSION PAPER: Preventing Financial Abuse of People with Dementia

This 2014 discussion paper by Alzheimer's Australia NSW examines how financial abuse of people with dementia occurs and what can be done to prevent it. Researchers found that much financial abuse is perpetrated within families and that a considerable proportion of financial abuse of people with dementia is perpetrated by people appointed as an attorney under an Enduring Power of Attorney not acting in the interests of the person with dementia. People with dementia, particularly those who live alone, are susceptible to exploitation and abuse by neighbours and friends who prey on their vulnerability. The research has implications for many stakeholders including lawyers, police, banks and community services. The report can be accessed [here](#).

NATSICC calls for Decisive action to change the system

On 2 August, following revelations of abuse at the Don Dale juvenile correctional facility, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Commission (NATSICC) issued a statement called for the announced Royal Commission to urgently investigate whether a culture of cover-ups and a lack of organisational empathy towards young people is endemic throughout the criminal justice system. NATSICC has made the following calls: Alternatives to incarceration need to be incorporated into the national juvenile justice system, given our nation is already hurting with all the suicides and the ongoing abuse through generational trauma; The mistreatment of the 'invisible' or those most marginalised, including children is bordering on endemic and it needs to stop; The Royal Commission must engage families and communities that are directly affected by juvenile incarceration, to discover why Young Aboriginal people are 26 times more likely to be in detention and what can be done to break the cycle. Find out more [here](#).

REFUGEE COUNCIL PETITION: 'BRING THEM HERE'

The Refugee Council of Australia has launched a campaign calling for the Government to bring people from Nauru to immediate safety, for an urgent independent investigation into the all the incidents of alleged abuse, and for a national summit to provide humane, legal and sustainable alternatives to Australia's treatment of people seeking asylum. On August 10, 2016, The Guardian released the 'Nauru

Files' – 2116 incident reports detailing child abuse, child sexual abuse, threats, self-harm and psychological damage. Children feature in over half the incidents reported, despite making up less than 20% of the population of the detention centres. To lend your support, visit the Refugee Council [webpage](#).

ACMRO WELCOMES DECISION TO CLOSE MANUS

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office has welcomed the decision of the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Mr Peter O'Neill, and Australian Minister of Immigration, Mr Peter Dutton, to close the Manus Island Detention centre. Fr Maurizio Pettenà has urged a quick solution to the situation of the men in the detention centre. 'We are concerned that refugees who have been determined as genuine refugees will not be found a safe country of settlement. ... We again affirm that the Catholic Church opposes mandatory indefinite detention and offshore detention because these policy responses do not respect the dignity of people seeking our help. This is also not consistent with Australia's obligations under the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention. ... Governments have a responsibility to manage migration flows, but the Australian Government's current approach is becoming morally abhorrent and should change,' he said. Read the statement [here](#).

ACMRO MIGRANT AND REFUGEE KIT

Migrant and Refugee Sunday was celebrated on 28 August. This year marks the 102nd anniversary of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. As part of the celebrations, the ACMRO prepared the annual Migrant and Refugee Kit. The purpose of the kit is to help schools and parishes to prepare celebrations for Migrant and Refugee Sunday. The kit reflects on the theme *Migrants and Refugees Challenge Us – The response of the Gospel of Mercy*, as outlined by Pope Francis in his message for Migrant and Refugee Day 2016. The kit is available to download and print [here](#).

2016 UNHCR GLOBAL TRENDS: FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN 2015.

UNHCR, the Refugee Agency of the United Nations, has released its annual report on forced displacement of peoples worldwide. It reports that wars and persecution have driven more people from their homes than at any time since its records began. The report shows that a total of 65.3 million people were displaced at the end of 2015, compared to 59.5 million just 12 months earlier. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees says: 'At sea, a frightening number of refugees and migrants are dying each year. On land, people fleeing war are finding their way blocked by closed borders.' The report is available [here](#).

Catholic bishops support West Papuan people

The Executive Committee of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania met recently in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. In a statement of 22 August, the Committee raised some key issues of regional justice including the rights of West Papuans. 'They seek what every family and culture seeks: respect of personal and communal dignity, free expression of one's aspirations, and good neighbourly relations. Political boundaries can never contain or control ethnic relationships and so we urge governments to support the West Papuan people's desire to participate fully in the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG). Therefore we wish to support the 2003 joint interfaith declaration 'Papua Land of Peace'. Blocked participation in MSG is a wound in the side of all Melanesians. For West Papuans, the MSG is a natural place of collaboration and a potential source of deeper regional understanding. In that

regard we wish also to acknowledge the assistance of Indonesian authorities in making possible a recent visit of PNG and Solomon Islands Bishops to Jayapura in order to meet with their brother Bishops in West Papua. Such visits are always for the cause of peace,' the Bishops said. Read the full statement [here](#).

MORNING STAR RISING PRAYER RESOURCES

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of Brisbane has prepared resources for prayer and liturgy in support of the people of West Papua. They say, 'Fear and deep concern are widespread in West Papua; yet, their faith in God's abiding love through all their difficulties remains strong. They would appreciate your prayerful support as they endure much pain and oppression. The following resources may be used in whole or in part in public worship or privately.' The resources can be accessed [here](#).

ANTI-POVERTY WEEK: 16–22 OCTOBER 2016

Poverty and severe hardship affect more than a million Australians. Around the world, more than a billion people are desperately poor. In Anti-Poverty Week, YOU can help fight poverty and hardship! Anti-Poverty Week is a week where all Australians are encouraged to organise or take part in an activity aiming to highlight or overcome issues of poverty and hardship here in Australia or overseas. It was established in Australia as an expansion of the UN's annual International Anti-Poverty Day on October 17. The main aims are to: strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and in Australia; and, encourage research, discussion and action to address the

se problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments. Everyone is encouraged to help reduce poverty and hardship by organising an activity during the Week or taking part in an activity organised by others. To find out more, visit the [website](#).

ACOSS: 'Unemployed and pensioners collateral damage'.

Australian Council of Social Service CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie said the looming budget fight threatens to hurt those on the lowest incomes. 'The Government has announced this week that the first order of business for the new Parliament will be to cut the Newstart Allowance, pensions and family payments through removal of the energy supplement,' said Dr Goldie. ACOSS, Australian Unemployed Workers' Union, Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, Carers Australia, Jobs Australia, National Council of Single Mothers and their Children, National Welfare Rights Network, People with Disability have written to both the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition calling on them not to cut the supplement as part of a \$6.5 billion 'savings' bill. 'Whatever the original purpose of the energy supplement, neither Labor nor any other party with a commitment to a decent social safety net could support slashing payments to people living below the poverty line.' To read more visit [here](#).



ACSJC Publications September 16

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2016–2017 – ORDER NOW!

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement is entitled 'A Place at the Table: Social justice in an Ageing Society'. 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](#).

Complementary Resources

The ACSJC website (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au) will have resources available for download free of charge before Social Justice Sunday. They will include Social Justice Sunday Liturgy Notes, a PowerPoint presentation and community and education resources.

Prayer Cards and 'Ten Steps' leaflets can be ordered from the ACSJC on (02) 8306 3499 or by email: admin@acsjc.org.au

Promotion

The Bishops would welcome promotion of the Statement in the weeks leading up to Social Justice Sunday. A possible entry in your parish bulletin or newsletter could be:

DISCUSSION GUIDES: DIGNITY AND WORK 2016

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has issued three short discussion guides that address critical issues concerning justice for Australia's most vulnerable workers or for those who confront the reality of unemployment. These vital aspects of work and dignity in our country address: the inadequate levels of income support offered to people who are unemployed; the risk that penalty rates will be cut for vulnerable workers; and the increasing intrusion of work demands into family time and weekends. We encourage you to promote these documents in your networks and publications. We hope that they will be a valuable resource for anyone who wants to be informed about the Church's commitment to justice and fulfilment in the workplace. The discussion guides can be accessed [here](#).

SERIES PAPER 78 – 'PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST: PASTORAL LETTERS FOR THE FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER 2010-2015.'

In the latest Catholic Social Justice Series, the ACSJC has brought together a collection of the Pastoral Letters issued by Bishop Christopher Saunders. *Putting People First: Pastoral Letters for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker 2010-2015*, provides an invaluable record of the significant issues relating to work and justice in that five-year period: the global financial crisis; the Northern Territory 'intervention' and the future of remote communities; the Insecure Work inquiry of the ACTU; and the public outcry at the inadequacy of allowances for the unemployed and sole parents. The letters include succinct and accurate summaries of the arguments with sufficient, reliable statistics. Professor Paul Smyth provides an extensive introduction to the series paper. [\[LINK\]](#)

DISCUSSION GUIDE: 2016 WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE

The theme for the 49th World Day of Peace Message from Pope Francis is *Overcome Indifference and Win Peace*. Pope Francis' message is a heartfelt plea to us all to engage with the world around us, not to turn our backs on suffering and injustice, and 'not to lose hope in our human ability to conquer evil and to combat resignation and indifference'. He highlights the responsibilities we share, not simply as individuals but as a society. If we are to honour the spirit of this Jubilee of Mercy – and the presence of a God who cares about us and will not abandon us – we need to show genuine and practical concern for the most vulnerable among us. The ACSJC has prepared a Discussion Guide for the papal message, which is available on our [website](#).

BUILDING BRIDGES

The book, *Building Bridges: Social Justice Statements from Australia's Bishops 1988 to 2013*, brings the 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](#).

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



News Monitor September 2016

[English newsreader sends personal message to refugees](#)

22-Aug-2016

An English newsreader is one of 7000 Catholics who have sent messages of solidarity to refugee families fleeing their homes in Syria and Iraq, reports *The Tablet*.

['The solar nun' moves a step closer to the sun](#)

19-Aug-2016

Environmentalists are mourning the death of Charity Sr Paula Gonzalez, a Cincinnati nun who spent the last 45 years of her life advocating for renewable energy.

[Compassion on tap: Portable shower for the homeless](#)

24-Aug-2016

Two Catholic former schoolmates from Brisbane who started the world's first mobile laundry service for the homeless have now launched their first portable shower, reports *The Catholic Leader*.

[Call for overhaul of 'outdated' race-hate laws](#)

24-Aug-2016

The NSW Council of Christians and Jews is among 24 community groups who have banded together to urge the NSW government to overhaul its race-hate legislation.

[Psychologist pays heavy price for speaking out about Nauru](#)

24-Aug-2016

Catholic psychologist and traumatologist Paul Stevenson lost his job when he spoke out about the trauma he witnessed on Nauru, reports *The Catholic Leader*.

[Iranian religious leader applauds Pope over Islam stance](#)

24-Aug-2016

One of the top religious leaders in Iran has told Pope Francis he is delighted that the head of the "Catholic world" has been quick to separate terrorists, and those who support terror groups like Islamic State, from practising Muslims, reports *The Tablet*.

[Josephite conference focuses on those at the edge of society](#)

18-Aug-2016

In a sign of their continued support for the disadvantaged, the Sisters of St Joseph are holding a conference this week that focuses on those on the margins of Australian society.

[Time to defuse ticking bombs of Nauru and Manus camps](#)

17-Aug-2016

The suggestion that the camps on Nauru and Manus Island need to remain filled in order to send a message to people smugglers is not only morally unacceptable; it is strategically questionable, writes Fr Frank Brennan SJ in *Eureka Street*.

[Media moves on, but violence impairs lives forever](#)

17-Aug-2016

When violence occurs, the media floods us with images and repeated accounts, and after three days moves on. We must call to mind the wounded, those horribly maimed, whose future lives are impaired, writes Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ.

[Vatican treats homeless to pizza and swim at the beach](#)

17-Aug-2016

As millions of people in the northern hemisphere enjoy their annual summer holidays, Pope Francis and his almoner are providing a beach escape for those who cannot afford them, reports NCR Online.

[Pope makes surprise visit to women rescued from sex trade](#)

15-Aug-2016

Pope Francis has paid a surprise visit to a community helping 20 young women get their lives back together after being rescued from prostitution, reports the Catholic News Service.

[Bring Nauru refugees to Australia, says Jesuit agency](#)

12-Aug-2016

Jesuit Social Services has joined the calls to immediately bring people seeking asylum on Nauru to Australia in light of the leaked 'Nauru files' which allege countless cases of abuse, sexual assault, and self-harm of people in Australia's care.

[How is everything going? Pope invites Syrian refugees to lunch](#)

12-Aug-2016

Pope Francis invited 21 Syrian refugees to join him at the Vatican yesterday for a luncheon that was part reunion and part progress report, reports the Catholic News Service.

[Mother Teresa celebrations to focus on the poor and suffering](#)

09-Aug-2016

The poor, the suffering, and those who minister to them will be at the centre of celebrations leading up to the canonisation of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata at the Vatican, reports the Catholic News Service.

[Iraqi refugees welcomed to Brisbane after two years in camps](#)

05-Aug-2016

The Archbishop of Brisbane, Mark Coleridge, has welcomed two newly arrived Iraqi refugee families who have been reunited with relatives living in Brisbane after spending two years in refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon.

[Detention centre chaplain sickened by treatment of youths](#)

04-Aug-2016

The chaplain who ministers to youth inside Darwin’s notorious Don Dale detention centre, and has even washed the boys’ feet, said he was “sick to the core” after watching graphic television images of actions by guards, reports *The Catholic Leader*.

[Report finds refugee children forced into child labour](#)

03-Aug-2016

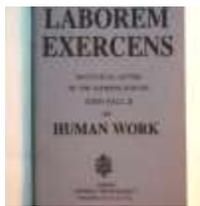
A report by Caritas Europe has found that economic hardship experienced by Syrian refugee families living in neighbouring countries is forcing children into prostitution and child labour, reports *The Tablet*.

[Back on the Papal plane: Pope says Islam not violent](#)

01-Aug-2016

In an interview on his flight returning from World Youth Day in Kraków, Poland, Pope Francis denied that Islam itself is violent and insisted that the potential for violence lies within every religion, including Catholicism, reports *Crux*.

- courtesy [CathNews](#) from *Church Resources*.



Social Justice Diary September 2016

September 2016

1	Thu	National Biodiversity Month World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation READ MORE ↓ National Wattle Day 1815: Sisters of Charity founded by Mary Aikenhead
2	Fri	1991: Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act passed by Parliament - ACSJC resources on Justice for Indigenous People
3	Sat	
4	Sun	Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Father’s Day

5	Mon	National Child Protection Week 1997: Death of Mother Teresa of Calcutta 2013: The Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers came into force - ACSJC resources on Workplace Justice
6	Tue	
7	Wed	National Threatened Species Day - ACSJC resources on the Environment 1936: Death in Hobart Zoo of last Tasmanian tiger in captivity
8	Thu	International Literacy Day
9	Fri	
10	Sat	World Suicide Prevention Day READ MORE ↓
11	Sun	Twenty Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Child Protection Sunday 2001: Terrorist attacks on World Trade Centre, New York and Washington DC - ACSJC resources on Peacebuilding
12	Mon	1977: Death of anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko - ACSJC resources on Confronting Racism
13	Tue	2007: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by UN - ACSJC resources on Justice for Indigenous People
14	Wed	1981: Pope John Paul II's encyclical Laborem Exercens ('On Human Work')
15	Thu	International Day of Democracy
16	Fri	International Day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer - ACSJC resources on the Environment
17	Sat	

18	Sun	Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time 1961: Death of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld
19	Mon	
20	Tue	
21	Wed	International Day of Peace - ACSJC resources on Peacebuilding
22	Thu	
23	Fri	1959: Australian Consumers Association launched
24	Sat	
25	Sun	Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time Social Justice Sunday READ MORE ↓ World Maritime Day
26	Mon	International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons - ACSJC resources on Peacebuilding
27	Tue	St Vincent de Paul 1988: Formation of Burma's National League for Democracy by Aung San Suu Kyi
28	Wed	St Wenceslas READ MORE ↓
29	Thu	
30	Fri	1975: Proclamation of Australia's Racial Discrimination Act - ACSJC resources on Confronting Racism