

ACSJC Monthly Briefing June 2017 No 190



From the Secretariat June 2017

Dear friends,

This week we have been celebrating National Reconciliation Week, which runs from 27 May through to 3 June. The week spans two important commemorations. These commemorations are all the more significant as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, in which over 90 per cent of Australians voted for the constitution to be amended to include Indigenous people in the census, and the 25th anniversary of the High Court's 1992 Mabo decision that introduced native title into Australian law and removed the myth of *terra nullius*.

That the recognition of the First Peoples, their land, history and culture is captured in these momentous decisions also reminds us that the work of reconciliation and recognition continues. This is captured in the theme of Reconciliation Week: 'Let's Take the Next Steps'. The organisers have called for all Australians to join the national reconciliation effort and remind us that all big changes take persistence and courage.

On the eve of the 50th Anniversary of the 1967 referendum more than 250 delegates at the 2017 First Nations National Constitutional Convention at Uluru issued an historic '[Statement From The Heart](#)' with the hope of improving the lives of future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Constitutional Convention found that Indigenous people don't want recognition in the Constitution if it means a 'simple acknowledgement'. Rather, they want reform that makes a real difference in their communities, endorsing a treaty and calling for a referendum for a voice in Parliament.

The Statement says that the First People's ancient sovereignty was never ceded and that it continues to co-exist with the sovereignty of the Crown.

'This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. ...

'With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood,' the Statement says.

The entrenched social and economic disadvantage of Indigenous communities is the driver for substantive recognition and change. Ever-increasing rates of Indigenous incarceration are a key indicator of powerlessness and disenfranchisement. Over the 25 years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody handed down its findings, including the recommendation that prison be a last resort, the rate of incarceration has doubled, with Indigenous people making up 27 per cent of national prison population.

The Uluru Statement says, 'Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates.

This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

‘These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is *the torment of our powerlessness*.

‘We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take *a rightful place* in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.’

In 2004, the Howard government announced the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, saying that ‘the experiment in elected representation for indigenous people has been a failure’. By 2005, both ATSIC and its Regional Councils were axed. The Commission’s programs were ‘mainstreamed’ into various government departments and its influence on policy-making as an elected national Indigenous voice was reduced to a government-appointed advisory body. Over the past decade, Indigenous communities have worked to overcome the lack of representation through various offices and bodies such as the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples.

Delegates at the First Nations Convention at Uluru are now calling for a ‘First Nations Voice’ to be enshrined in the Constitution.

The Statement also calls for the establishment of a Makarrata Commission. ‘Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: *the coming together after a struggle*. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

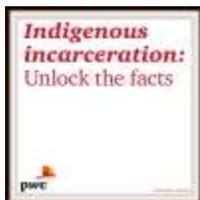
‘We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

‘In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future,’ the Statement concludes.

The [Indigenous Steering Committee](#) of the Referendum Council says the conversation at Uluru built on six months of discussions held around the country where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples considered five options presented in the Referendum Council’s discussion paper. When asked what constitutional recognition means to them, delegates said they want reform that makes a real difference in their communities. The Steering Committee says that the Uluru Statement will now inform and be issued through the Council’s report to the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, which will be delivered on 30 June.

The First Nations National Constitutional Convention at Uluru has made a vital contribution to national deliberations on the Constitutional recognition of the First Peoples. The Statement of the Heart gives voice to the long struggle for genuine reform and substantive recognition. It is another milestone in the reconciliation movement, renewing the call of our Indigenous sisters and brothers – ‘walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.’

John Ferguson
National Executive Officer



Current Issues/Resources June 2017

RESOURCES FOR RECONCILIATION WEEK 2017

National Reconciliation week evolved from a Week of Prayer first organised in 1993. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council has compiled a range of information for Reconciliation Week. They offer these resources for communities to use in 'Taking the next steps' in the process of reconciliation with Australia's first people. NATSICC advocates for over 120,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in Australia and is striving to build relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Catholics. The resources can be accessed [here](#).

REPORT: INDIGENOUS INCARCERATION: UNLOCK THE FACTS

Indigenous incarceration is costing nearly \$8 billion annually and will grow to almost \$20 billion per annum by 2040 without further intervention, according to a new PwC Australia. Welfare costs associated with the issue will rise to \$110 million by 2040, while economic costs will reach over \$9 billion annually. Those who have been incarcerated are at greater risk of financial stress, low levels of educational attainment, poor employment prospects, and find it harder to access accommodation. As a result, they have a greater chance of recidivism, poor health and well-being. Annual savings to the economy of nearly \$19 billion could be achieved by 2040 if the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates of incarceration were closed. To access the report, visit [here](#).

REPORT: OVER-REPRESENTED AND OVERLOOKED

The over-imprisonment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is a growing national crisis that is being overlooked by all levels of government in Australia, the Human Rights Law Centre and Change the Record report reveals. The imprisonment rate has skyrocketed nearly 250 per cent since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women make up around 34 per cent of the female prison population. The report calls for governments to move away from 'tough on crime' approaches in reality and rhetoric, and to focus on evidence-based solutions that tackle drivers of offending and prevent women coming into contact with the justice system in the first place. To access the report, visit [here](#).

REPORT: BRINGING THEM HOME 20 YEARS ON

A new report by the Healing Foundation marks 20 years since the landmark *Bringing Them Home* report was tabled in Federal Parliament. *Bringing Them Home 20 Years On*, sets out an action plan to overhaul Australia's Indigenous policy landscape. Healing Foundation Board Chair Steve Larkin said, 'Our Stolen Generations haven't been able to heal because Australia has failed to address their needs in a coordinated, holistic way. As a result, their grief, loss and anger is being passed onto their kids and grandkids.' One of the most pressing needs highlighted by the report is for a federally coordinated financial reparations. To access the report, visit [here](#).

'CLOSE THE GAP' PROGRESS AND PRIORITIES REPORT

Pat Turner and Jackie Huggins, Co-chairs of the Close the Gap Campaign, have launched their 2017 Progress and Priorities Report. The report raises concerns that the targets set by the Council of

Australian Governments are not being met. It urges governments to commit to closing the health gap by implementing co-ordinated partnerships with the Commonwealth. It also calls on governments to take account of the social and cultural determinants of health, and asks the Federal Government to initiate a national inquiry into racism in hospitals and other health care settings to identify and counter racism's impact on health care. To access the report, visit [here](#).

#SYNOD2018 SURVEY – CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people across Australia are being called to share their views about life, faith, and their experience of Church through an online survey published by the Australian Bishops. The survey seeks to capture the opinions and perspectives of young people as part of a national consultation process that will inform an international conversation in Rome next year. Australians aged between 16 and 29 years are encouraged to complete the survey. The questions cover a range of topics including: the experience of being listened to, using social media and technology, friendships and influences in today's world, opportunities for engagement with Church activities such as, outreach programs, youth masses, community leadership or parish events. Young people are encouraged to tell their friends about the survey or share the link with their networks. Complete the survey [here](#).

PACIFIC CALLING PARTNERSHIP: 'CLIMATE CHANGE ISN'T A JOKE'

You are invited to take part in a campaign towards a Congregational voice on climate change and the Pacific Islands. For Facebook: Create a poster (hand written or typed) with the wording 'Climate change isn't a joke. We need climate action now'; Take a photo of yourself or others holding the poster; Send the photo to info@pacificclimatewatch.com.au; It will be posted on the Pacific Climate Watch Facebook page and website. If you would like to send a video: Create a 30-100 second video; Send it to info@pacificclimatewatch.com.au; It will be posted on the Pacific Climate Watch Facebook page and website. To find out more, visit the [website](#).

PETITION: FINALISE A FAIR AND PERMANENT BORDER WITH EAST TIMOR

A number of individuals and organisations, including Sr Susan Connelly SOSJ and the Timor Sea Justice Campaign, are organising petitions for the Australian government to negotiate on fair terms with the government of Timor-Leste to draw a fair and permanent border, based on the median line, which would allow both nations to claim what is rightfully theirs under international law. This would strengthen security and give certainty regarding investment, and would uphold the rights of nations to a defined and internationally accepted sovereignty. You can sign an online petition on the Timor Sea Justice Campaign [website](#) or download the formal paper Petition to the House of Representatives ([available here](#)) and get it signed by those in your networks.

BOOKLET: 'TEN THINGS EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT ISLAM'

Written by distinguished international scholar Professor John Esposito, and produced by Columban Missionaries, and this 36-page booklet provides basic information about Islam and enables a better understanding of the beliefs and practices of Muslims. It is beautifully illustrated and answers the most commonly-asked questions about Islam. It dispels the stereotypes and misrepresentation that too often prevail in the secular press. Suitable for schools, parishes, homes and offices. Cost: \$8.80 (Incl. GST & Postage). To order, visit [here](#).

REPORT: PROTECTING CHILDREN ON THE MOVE FROM VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

Millions of children are on the move across international borders – fleeing violence and conflict, disaster or poverty, in pursuit of a better life. Hundreds of thousands move on their own. When they encounter

few opportunities to move legally, children resort to dangerous routes and engage smugglers to help them cross borders. Serious gaps in the laws, policies and services meant to protect children on the move further leave them bereft of protection and care. They can become easy prey for traffickers and others who abuse and exploit them. This UNICEF report, 'A Child is a Child', calls for a six-point plan to keep refugee and migrant children safe. To access the report, visit [here](#).

BRIEFING: THE INTERDICTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AT SEA

There is a growing chasm between international law and the ways in which Australia and the European Union respond to people who seek protection by boat. A new policy brief from the Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, outlines why a comprehensive, humanitarian 'protection-centred vision' must replace the present military-led, border control approach that dominates EU and Australian policies towards asylum seekers at sea. *The interdiction of asylum seekers at sea: Law and (mal)practice in Europe and Australia* recommends steps that Australia and the EU can take to comply with international law. To download the policy brief, visit [here](#).

CATHOLIC ALLIANCE FOR PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA) is a national initiative to influence hearts and minds in the Catholic community towards a more just, compassionate and humane welcome of people seeking asylum. CAPSA recognises that our current Australian government policy towards people seeking safety on our shores is in stark contrast to the core Gospel-teachings and recent messages of Pope Francis. The group envisages a community that values the fair and humane treatment of people seeking asylum and for a society where our government welcomes and supports people seeking asylum into our community. CAPSA is currently seeking donations to help expand their work across Australia. Your donation will help us run events in schools, facilitate meetings with politicians, create useful resources and videos, and run workshops with community members. All donations to CAPSA are tax deductible through Jesuit Social Services. To help continue this important work, please donate via [this website](#).



ACSJC Publications June 2017

PASTORAL LETTER – FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER 2017

The Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker for 2015 is entitled *The Right to Work – Our shared responsibility*. Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen draws on the words of St Pope John Paul II, when he visited Australia in 1986, to argue for just wages and conditions of work, adequacy in the support and dignified treatment of people who are unemployed, and for the shared responsibility of the community to shoulder the costs and burdens of job creation ensuring the right to work for all. It is available for download [here](#).

DISCUSSION GUIDE: WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE 2017

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has issued a discussion guide for the annual Message for the World Day of Peace from Pope Francis. The theme of this year's Message is *Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace*. In it Pope Francis confronts the global violence that amounts to 'a horrifying world war fought piecemeal'. He holds up the example of Jesus himself, who walked the path of nonviolence 'to the very end, to the cross, whereby he became our peace and put an end to hostility'. The Pope also reminds us of the many triumphs of nonviolent activism, including St Teresa of Calcutta and St John Paul II's heroic involvement in the downfall of European Communist regimes. The discussion guide is available in print and online: click [here](#).

SERIES PAPER 79 – 'Human Trafficking and Slavery: A response from Australian Catholics'

This paper is written by Christine Carolan, Executive Officer of Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) and Sr Noelene Simmons SM, NSW Regional Co-ordinator for ACRATH. It describes the forms that slavery and related crimes take in the modern world, the Church's teaching on and response to slavery and other forms of exploitation, and the international and Australian laws that deal with slavery. It also describes the work of organisations committed to combating slavery and helping its victims – in particular, ACRATH's efforts to educate Australians, to advocate on behalf of victims, and to work with similar organisations here and overseas to shut down human trafficking and help its victims. The paper discusses particular problems faced by those who experience trafficking and exploitation, including people who may be subject to forced marriage. It also gives suggestions for people interested in supporting the work of ACRATH and similar organisations. [Link](#).

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2016–2017

The 2016–2017 Social Justice Statement of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is entitled 'A Place at the Table: Social justice in an ageing society'. PDF and Word versions of the Statement as well as a range of print and multimedia resources – [here](#).

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 June 2017

[Migration shouldn't be forced: Archbishop](#)

30-May-2017

Migration should be a choice rather than something forced or involuntary, said the Vatican's permanent observer to the United Nations, reports CNS via Crux.

[Vinnies welcomes affordable housing plan](#)

30-May-2017

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has welcomed the state opposition's policy announcement that at least 25 per cent of new properties constructed on government-owned land will be set aside as affordable housing, the Catholic Weekly reports.

[Raise minimum wage: ACCER](#)

30-May-2017

A century-old landmark case was invoked by the Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations (ACCR) in its submission calling for the Fair Work Commission to increase the minimum wage in its annual wage review, the ACBC Media Blog reports.

[Time ticking for failed Iranian refugees](#)

29-May-2017

From October, failed Iranian refugees living in the community will be transferred to a new short-term visa and given about 18 months to leave the country before they are deemed to be unlawful, The Weekend Australian reports.

[Funding boost for women fleeing violence](#)

29-May-2017

More than 100 properties in Victoria will be provided for women and children, and Aboriginal and Muslim women will be given targeted support, as part of a \$133.2 million family violence package, the Herald Sun reports.

[Pope visits factory to offer support for workers](#)

29-May-2017

Pope Francis has highlighted the struggles that workers face in a globalised economy with a visit to a troubled steel factory in Genoa, the Catholic Herald reports.

[Indigenous leaders push for treaty](#)

29-May-2017

Indigenous leaders have called for a treaty instead of "symbolic" constitutional acknowledgment of Aboriginal people as the first owners of the country, The Australian reports.

[Shorten calls for inquiry into disability sector](#)

26-May-2017

Labor has vowed to establish a royal commission on violence and abuse against people with disabilities, the Sydney Morning Herald reports.

[Helping women climb out of poverty](#)

25-May-2017

More than 500 women gathered at three events this month to show solidarity with women living in poverty, Caritas Australia reports.

[Pope and Trump hold 'peace talks'](#)

25-May-2017

Pope Francis and US President Donald Trump spent 30 minutes speaking privately yesterday at the Vatican, with Mr Trump telling the Pope as he left, "I won't forget what you said," CNS reports.

[Prayers for murdered Mexican journalists](#)

25-May-2017

Following the murders of six journalists this year, the Mexican Bishops' Conference offered prayers for journalists as they face increased violence in their efforts to uncover truth, CNA reports.

[Joining forces to help the needy](#)

25-May-2017

Australian Catholic University and Orange Sky Laundry service have partnered to help people who are doing it tough, the university reports

[Health van to help homeless](#)

24-May-2017

With homelessness on the rise, the NSW Branch of the Order of Malta is expanding its efforts to provide healthcare and protection to those in need, Catholic Outlook reports.

[Vatican climate could change when leaders meet](#)

24-May-2017

All eyes will turn today to the much-anticipated visit at the Vatican between Pope Francis and Donald Trump. The planet itself may pay heed, as well, writes Brian Roewe on NCR.

[Asylum-seeker deadline cruel: Vinnies chief](#)

23-May-2017

The Turnbull government's ultimatum to asylum-seekers to submit claims paperwork by October 1 would deny many access to a fair process, says the St Vincent de Paul Society.

[Bring Manus asylum-seekers to Australia: Charity](#)

17-May-2017

With the Turnbull government set to begin the closure of its PNG detention centre within weeks, now is the time to bring asylum-seekers from Manus Island to Australia, says the St Vincent de Paul Society.

[Slavery and death penalty mortal sins: Pope](#)

12-May-2017

Faith is a journey guided by the Holy Spirit, who helps the Church grow in understanding the sinful nature of once-accepted practices like slavery and the death penalty, Pope Francis said yesterday, reports CNS.

[Foreign aid cuts undermine global efforts](#)

11-May-2017

The federal budget has delivered a fourth consecutive cut to the overseas aid program, according to Caritas Australia.

[Youth lose out in budget: Vinnies](#)

10-May-2017

Youth are among the biggest losers of the 2017-18 budget, thanks to rising exclusion from higher education, housing and jobs, the St Vincent de Paul Society says.

Courtesy [CathNews](#)



Social Justice Diary June 2017

June 2017

1	Thu	Global Day of Parents
2	Fri	
3	Sat	<p>1886: Catholic and Anglican Martyrs of Uganda</p> <p>25th anniversary of the High Court's Mabo Case decision (1992)</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p>
4	Sun	<p>Pentecost Sunday</p> <p>International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression</p> <p>1989: Tiananmen Square Massacre</p>
5	Mon	World Environment Day

6	Tue	
7	Wed	
8	Thu	World Oceans Day
9	Fri	
10	Sat	1838: Myall Creek Massacre 1935: Establishment of Alcoholics Anonymous in New York
11	Sun	Trinity Sunday 1971: Neville Bonner became first Aboriginal Australian to hold a seat in Federal Parliament 1975: Ratification by Australia of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
12	Mon	World Day Against Child Labour 1988: Presentation by Aboriginal leaders of the Barunga Statement to Prime Minister Bob Hawke
13	Tue	
14	Wed	World Blood Donor Day
15	Thu	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
16	Fri	
17	Sat	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
18	Sun	Corpus Christi (The Body and Blood of Christ) National Refugee Week commences
19	Mon	International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

		<p>1945: Birth of Aung San Suu Kyi</p> <p>1969: Arbitration Commission affirmed principle of equal pay for women performing equal work</p>
20	Tue	<p>World Refugee Day</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p>
21	Wed	
22	Thu	
23	Fri	<p>Public Service Day</p> <p>International Widow's Day</p>
24	Sat	
25	Sun	<p>Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time</p> <p>Day of the Seafarer</p>
26	Mon	<p>International Day in Support of Victims of Torture</p> <p>READ MORE ↓</p> <p>International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking</p> <p><i>Eid-al-Fitr: Muslim breaking of the fast</i></p>
27	Tue	
28	Wed	
29	Thu	<p>Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles</p>
30	Fri	<p>1945: Introduction of unemployment benefits in Australia</p>