



# ACSJC BRIEFING

No. 47 – June 2004

From the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, the social justice and human rights agency of the Catholic Church in Australia - [www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)

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## FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear Friends,

Beginning last week, Australia has been celebrating Reconciliation Week. It commenced with Sorry Day on Monday 26 May – commemorating the anniversary of the 1997 tabling of the Inquiry Report about the separation of Indigenous children from their families - *Bringing them Home*.

National Reconciliation Week and the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation occur from 27 May each year. During this week we remember momentous occasions of the 1967 referendum, which gave Indigenous people equal rights under the Constitution, and the High Court's 1992 judgement in the Mabo case.

The Reconciliation events provide an opportunity for all members of our community to consider ways in which we can heal the wounds of the past and foster a shared future.

Practical and symbolic initiatives promoted by local communities that we now call the 'people's movement for recon-

ciliation' have kept alive the momentum for National Reconciliation. So the events of this week are also a celebration of the hope that remains strong throughout many communities across Australia, that the unfinished business of our shared history and national identity will be given a greater priority on the nation's agenda.

### THE ABOLITION OF ATSIC

On 27 May – the anniversary day of the 1967 referendum – the Government introduced into Parliament the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Amendment Bill 2004. The Bill would implement the Government's decision to abolish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. (<http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/browse.aspx?path=legislation%3Ecurrent+bill+by+portfolio>)

The Government has decided to close down ATSIC from 1 July 2004, redirect its programs and services to mainstream bureaucracies, abolish the Regional Councils from 30 June 2005 and, as an alternative, establish a Government-appointed body with only advisory powers in Indigenous affairs.

The Government says it wants the legislation passed by the end of June and that, should the Senate block the legislation, the programs administered by ATSIC will be mainstreamed anyway.

### WHAT DID AUSTRALIA'S INDIGENOUS LEADERS SAY?

This decision came as many were considering the significant reforms and a 'vision for a new ATSIC' recommended in the November 2003 Report of an ATSIC Review commissioned by the Government.

(<http://www.atsicreview.gov.au/>)

Lowitja O'Donoghue said abolishing the organisation would do nothing to help Indigenous people while denying them a say in their future.

Queensland ATSIC commissioner Ray Robinson said the decision is a massive setback for the Indigenous cause – “It just takes away our self-determination, our self-empowerment.”

Acting chair of ATSIC, Lionel Quartermaine said the Government would not improve conditions facing Indigenous people by abolishing the organisation and by “mainstreaming” its functions.

Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson said the Government had taken a step backward in abolishing ATSIC, and gone even further backwards with its mainstreaming proposals – as the performance of already mainstreamed health and education services indicated.

Linda Burney, NSW MLA, said the decision would take Aboriginal affairs back 30 years. “It's one thing to say whether a body is working or not, but to completely disband a representative group of people and then put every program into the government departments without any self-determination at all takes us back an enormous amount of years,” she said.

Tasmanian ATSIC commissioner Rodney Dillon said part of the reason for ATSIC's failure was the Government's refusal to commit adequate funding. “When you ask for more funding they look at you and say you've got to do with the funding you've got and start cutting programs,” he said. “When you cut programs Aboriginal people say ATSIC's at fault because they're cutting programs. It's sort of like a catch-22 situation.”

Delivering the inaugural ANU Reconciliation Lecture, Patrick Dodson said, “ATSIC was created by government so as to give Indigenous people a national and regional voice. We are now in a position where this voice is to be removed, on a whim, in a fit of pique, and without any discussion, consultation or negotiation with Indigenous Australians. And without any vision for alternatives.”

In this lecture, entitled “Beyond Bridges and Sorry”, Patrick Dodson did express a vision and an alternative. He said the Government's decision had opened up a new opportunity to find a resolution of the unfinished business between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

He called for a truly representative body – a new representative forum, able to develop policies, participate in ministerial decision-making and to set and monitor standards in services, “The determining of how an Indigenous voice that represents the views and aspirations of all our peoples is established must be a matter for Indigenous people”, he said.

### **A RECONCILIATION WEEK CALL FOR GENUINE DIALOGUE**

A vital element to the Reconciliation process is genuine dialogue. It is a value that is celebrated and promoted during this week. It has great symbolic value but also provides a very practical impetus to the process of National Reconciliation.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) and the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council have called on all political parties to ensure an adequate regional and national structure is in place to represent the needs and aspirations of Indigenous people.

Ms Melissa Brickell, Chairperson of NATSICC and Bishop Christopher Saunders, Chairman of the ACSJC said, “we acknowledge the importance of genuine dialogue and mutual respect in forging a shared future, and note that it is at this time that alternative arrangements to the structure of ATSIC are being considered.

“We urge all political parties to consider the rights of Indigenous people to have an influential voice in the decisions that directly affect them.” (<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>)

The legislation is now before Parliament. This is the time for all political parties to consider the views of Indigenous people concerning the Government's recent decision and the arrangements that need to be in place to ensure their voice is heard.

- *John Ferguson (National Executive Officer)*

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## LATEST PUBLICATIONS

(orders Tel: 02 9956 5811 or download an order form from the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/PDF/TEMPLATE-ORDERFORM.pdf>)

### **FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER: THE HUMAN COSTS BEHIND THE OFFICIAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**

Download the Pastoral Letter from the ACSJC website - [http://www.acsjc.org.au/content/issues/the\\_human\\_costs\\_behind\\_the\\_official\\_unemployment\\_rate.html](http://www.acsjc.org.au/content/issues/the_human_costs_behind_the_official_unemployment_rate.html)

### **OCCASIONAL PAPER: FROM ETHICS TO SPIRITUALITY**

Catholic Social Justice Series no.49 – Fr Gerard Gleeson reflects on the links between philosophy, theology and Christian spirituality. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage).

### **2004 SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR**

The 2004 Social Justice Calendar focuses on the theme “Cultivating a Culture of Peace”. This coincides with the theme for the 2004 Social Justice Sunday Statement.

Now at a reduced cost of \$4.40 (inc. GST), plus postage. [http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social\\_justice\\_calendar.html](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social_justice_calendar.html)

### **POSITION AND INFORMATION PAPER – DETENTION OF AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS AT GUANTANAMO BAY**

Website paper available at: [http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/publications/positionpapers/2003\\_11\\_28the\\_detention\\_of\\_australian\\_citizens\\_at\\_guantanamo\\_bay.html](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/publications/positionpapers/2003_11_28the_detention_of_australian_citizens_at_guantanamo_bay.html)

*(Postage rates for Catholic Social Justice Series Papers: 1 copy \$1; 2-3 copies \$1.45; 4-5 copies \$2.45)*

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## CURRENT ISSUES

### **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE – RECONCILIATION – A NATIONAL VOICE THAT COUNTS – 31 May 2004**

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council and the ACSJC have called on all political parties to ensure an adequate regional and national structure is in place to represent the needs and aspirations of Indigenous people. This call comes during Reconciliation Week and the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation. The call also follows the Government’s recently announced plan to abolish ATSIC. (<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>)

### **2004 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT**

This year’s Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Sunday Statement is entitled “Peace Be With You – Cultivating a Culture of Peace”. Anchoring itself firmly in Christ’s gift of peace to us, it acknowledges that “a culture of peace begins within our own hearts, spreads to our own households and then our communities before it can become an entrenched fact of the larger society’s life”.

The Statement will be launched in September prior to Social Justice Sunday on September 26. The ACSJC will commence taking orders for hard copies of the Statement during July. An order form will be available soon on the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

### **AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE – STATEMENT ON REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Meeting recently in Sydney, the Australian Catholic Bishops called on the Government and all Australians to respond with urgency to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. “We remain hopeful that hearts and minds will change so that the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia may be more humane, more respectful of human dignity”, the Bishops said. The Statement addresses issues including: the size of Australian’s humanitarian program; mandatory detention; the detention of

children; TPVs and Bridging Visa E; and the Pacific Solution. The message can be downloaded from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference website: [http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/plenary\\_2004/0519\\_refugees.html](http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/plenary_2004/0519_refugees.html)

### **HREOC REPORT - A LAST RESORT?**

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Report of the National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention has found that: Australia's immigration detention laws are inconsistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child; that children in detention for long periods are at a high risk of serious mental harm; and were deprived of fundamental rights while in detention. The report recommends that these children be released no later than four weeks after the tabling of the report (June 10); immigration laws should be amended to comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child; an independent guardian should be appointed for unaccompanied children; minimum standards of care should be codified in legislation; and, there should be a review of the impact on children of the Pacific Solution. This important Report can be accessed at the HREOC website: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au>

### **NSW RESOURCE - KIDS' STATS.**

A new online resource produced by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People aimed at helping community and government understand more about important areas of kids' lives including: family; child care; school and work; community; health; crime and safety; and economic security. It provides a useful starting point to examine a wide range of issues important to children and young people. To access this resource, visit: <http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au>

### **JUSTICE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS PAPER: "THE BETTER WAY"**

The Better Way – refugees, detention and Australians is available from the Melbourne Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace (03) 9926 5710 or the ACSJC website: [\[tent/pdf/risking\\\_all\\\_in\\\_search\\\_for\\\_human\\\_rights2.pdf\]\(http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/news\_and\_events/news\_and\_events.html\)](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Con-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

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## **JUNE NOTICES**

**MAY - JUNE: SBS TV SERIES, "ETHICS OF JOURNALISM - FINE LINE"**. A documentary series by Ellen Fanning looking at the working life of well-known journalists and the difficult ethical judgements they make. The remaining episodes will be broadcast at 7.30pm on SBS TV on: 2 & 9 June. An accompanying study guide can be downloaded at: <http://www.metromagazine.com.au/metro/frm.htm?highlight=2>

**MAY 27 - JUNE 3: NATIONAL EVENTS, "RECONCILIATION WEEK AND THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR RECONCILIATION"**. Events being held around the nation to commemorate the ongoing Journey of Healing can be found at the following websites: <http://www.alphalink.com.au/~rez/Journey/happening.htm> <http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/reconciliation/nrw.html>

**JUNE 2: SYDNEY LAUNCH: "A LAST RESORT?"** The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is launching the Report of its National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention. 6.00pm to 8.00pm, HR&EOC Hearing Room, Level 8, 133 Castlereagh St., Sydney. Enquiries: (02) 9284 9767

**JUNE 2: LECTURE, "INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND CAPE YORK PARTNERSHIPS"**. A public lecture by Noel Pearson concerning the Cape York Partnerships initiative that has been negotiated between the Aboriginal leaders of Cape York and the Queensland Government. 6.00pm, Kaleide Theatre, RMIT Building 8, City Campus, Swanston St, Melbourne. (refer: [http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/news\\_and\\_events/news\\_and\\_events.html](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/news_and_events/news_and_events.html))

**JUNE 2: BOOK LAUNCH, “REFUGE AUSTRALIA: AUSTRALIA’S HUMANITARIAN RECORD”** by Klaus Neumann and published by UNSW Press. The launch will be hosted by Ms Tanya Plibersek, Federal Member for Sydney. 1100am to 1.00pm, Parliament House: House of Representatives Members and Guests Bar Area. Bookings essential. Call: (02) 9310 3900. (refer: [http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whatshapening\\_events.php](http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whatshapening_events.php))

**JUNE 3: PUBLIC LECTURE, “HAS AUSTRALIA RETREATED FROM ITS OBLIGATIONS AT INTERNATIONAL LAW?”**. Mr Kevin Rudd will give a lecture on foreign affairs from 6.30pm to 8.00pm, Level 1, Melbourne Law School, 185 Pelham Street, Carlton, Victoria. For further information call (03) 8344 6589 or visit <http://events.unimelb.edu.au/view.php?eventID=931>

**JUNE 3: BRISBANE LAUNCH: “A LAST RESORT?”** The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is launching the Report of its National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention. 6.00pm to 8.00pm, Brisbane Room, City Hall, King George Square, Brisbane. Enquiries: (02) 9284 9767

**JUNE 4: LAUNCH, “PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN AUSTRALIA – A COMMUNITY EDUCATION KIT – NSW”**. The Public Interest Advocacy Centre is launching a community education kit that aims to provide basic information about the human rights that affect everyone in Australia. The Kit will be launched by Professor Hilary Charlesworth, Director of the Centre for International and Public Law, Law Faculty, Australian National University. 12.30pm to 2.00pm, Dixson Room at the NSW State Library, Sydney. RSVP on 02 9299 7833 or by email to [kslattery@piac.asn.au](mailto:kslattery@piac.asn.au). (refer: <http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html>)

**JUNE 4 – 6: CONFERENCE, “STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN!”**. Human rights conference convened by Amnesty International. Venue – Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle, WA. For cost

and registration details, visit [http://www.amnesty.org.au/whats\\_happening/stop\\_violence\\_against\\_women/](http://www.amnesty.org.au/whats_happening/stop_violence_against_women/) or call (02) 9217 7698

**JUNE 5: FUNDRAISER: “COMEDY OVERBOARD!”**. Adelaide fundraiser with Rod Quantoc and supporting acts in a benefit night for Justice for Refugees (SA). From 7.30pm, Norwood Town Hall. Bookings through BASS. (refer: [http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whatshapening\\_events.php](http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whatshapening_events.php))

**JUNE 9: PUBLIC FORUM, “GETTING OFF THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR: FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN AUSTRALIA”**. Distinguished journalists will discuss their encounters with censorship, particularly in relation to controversial government policies. Key-note Speaker – Cheikh Kone. 6.30pm, UTS Guthrie Theatre, Peter Johnson Building, 702 Harris Street, Ultimo Sydney (refer: <http://www.chilout.org/files/Flyer2004-06-09.doc>)

**JUNE 10: SEMINAR, “A CATHOLIC SOCIAL CONSCIENCE: CAN IT BE RECLAIMED?”**. The Australian Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs (ACMICA) and the Australian Catholic University are convening this free seminar from 7.00pm, Ryan Auditorium, ACU, 40 Edward Street, North Sydney. The Speaker Panel includes Frank Brennan SJ, Sandie Cornish and Stefan Gigacz. (refer: <http://www.acmica.org>)

**JUNE 12: CONCERT, “MELBOURNE CHORAL”**. The National Conference of the Australian Council of Christians and Jews is hosting a concert on Saturday evening from 8.15pm at the Slome Hall, Temple Beth Israel, 76 Alma Road, St. Kilda, Melbourne. Tickets: \$15. For bookings call (03) 9817 3848.

**JUNE 13: PANEL PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION: “HARMONY FOR UNDERSTANDING”**. The National Conference of the Australian Council of Christians and Jews is hosting a by-donation event from 8.00pm at the

Slome Hall, Temple Beth Israel, 76 Alma Road, St. Kilda, Melbourne. Tickets: \$15. RSVP: call (03) 9817 3848.

**JUNE 14: MULTI-FAITH FORUM, "THE WATER OF LIFE".** This forum will gather people from different religious traditions in the Sydney area, not simply to pray for rain, but to explore together the significance of water from each faith perspective. The Faith and Ecology Network is organising this event, supported by the Columban Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice in association with Catholic Earthcare Australia. 9.15am to 4.30pm, St Patrick's College Hall, Edgar Street, Strathfield. For further information call (02) 9488 8844 or email charlesdrue@netscape.net

**JUNE 17: FORUM, "AUSTRALIA'S VISION FOR A FAIRER WORLD: Building Human Security and Reducing Poverty".** Forum hosted by the Australian Council for International Development and the Australian Institute of International Affairs, in Canberra 5.00pm to 7.00pm. For further information call (02) 6285 1816 (refer: <http://www.unaa.org.au/diary.html>)

**JUNE 18: FORUM, "EDUCATING THE ACTIVISTS".** The University of Technology, Sydney is hosting this forum as part of the Forum Series 'Popular Education, Activism and Organising'. 9.00am to 2.00pm, Building 10, 235 Jones St, Broadway, Sydney. Cost: \$30 (refer: <http://www.cpe.uts.edu.au/forums/activism.html>)

**JUNE 19: EVENT, "AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL COMES TO BUNDEENA".** Local Asylum Seeker support groups are hosting an afternoon event from 2.00 to 5.00pm at Bundeena public school, Scarborough St, Bundeena (south of Sydney in the Royal National Park. Address from Amnesty International's Brett Solomon followed by the filming of 'Molly and Mobarak'. Inquiries: (02) 9544 4983. (refer: <http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html>)

**JUNE 20: RALLY, "SHOW YOUR HEART FOR REFUGEES: Rally & Field of Hearts".** On UN World Refugee Day a Field of Hearts installation in support for refugee rights will take place at the Parliament House Lawns in Canberra. (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/canberra/calendar/?day=20&month=6>)

**JUNE 21: CONFERENCE, NATIONAL FORUM ON MENTAL HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS** in the Political Context of Contemporary Australia". Topics addressed at this conference will include: human rights and mental health; freedom of expression and speech, rights in the workplace, anti-discrimination, women's rights, family and children's rights, and torture and punishment. 8.30am to 5.30pm, Federal Parliament House, Canberra. Invited speakers include: Dr Carmen Lawrence, Sen. Aden Ridgeway, Sen. Kerry Nettle. Cost: \$150 waged, \$120 unwaged. Advanced bookings essential at the latest by 15 June. (refer: <http://www.SAVE-Australia.com.au>)

**JUNE 22: BREAKFAST SEMINAR, "REFUGEES; POLITICS OR JUSTICE".** Julian Burnside QC will speak at this World Refugee Day Breakfast. 9.30am at the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre, cnr Bell St & St Georges Rd, Preston, Melbourne. Call (03) 9230 4470 (refer: [http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/news\\_and\\_events/news\\_and\\_events.html](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/news_and_events/news_and_events.html))

**JUNE 23: JOINT CONFERENCE, "FOR FAIRNESS AND SERVICES: Restoring the Integrity of the Taxation System".** ACOSS and the CFMEU will hold a one-day conference concerning the erosion of the equity of the taxation system and its capacity to fund basic community services. It will discuss policies to close the worst shelters and loopholes of the system, improve fairness, and strengthen public revenue. It will be convened at the Stamford Airport Hotel in Sydney. All interested members of the community are invited to attend. Confirm attendance by Wednesday 2nd June on (02) 9267 7644 or email [bstirling@fed.cfmeu.asn.au](mailto:bstirling@fed.cfmeu.asn.au)

**JUNE 26: SEMINAR, "BUILDING A CULTURE OF LIFE".** Dr Brigid Vout MBBS will consider contemporary threats to human life and dignity, examine what a 'culture of life' would be like, and what part we might play in building a culture of love and solidarity. The unit will draw upon the John Paul II's encyclical on bioethics, "The Gospel of Life." It will focus on and workshop some specific life issues such as abortion, euthanasia and reproductive technology. 9.30am to 4.30pm, the Catholic Centre, 3 Keating St Lidcombe. Cost: \$60.00 (refer: <http://www.caec.com.au/events/elective.html#life>)

**JULY 5 - 8: COURSE, "MINISTRY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CATHOLIC CONTEXT".** Broken Bay Institute's Centre for Christian Spirituality and Catholic Youth Ministry Broken Bay are making available units in youth ministry that can be taken individually or towards further studies. Follow the following links for location and cost details: <http://www.ccs.catholic.edu.au>, <http://www.brokenbay.catholic.org.au/youth>.

*(email news of your forthcoming social justice event by the last week of each month to: [admin@acsjc.org.au](mailto:admin@acsjc.org.au))*

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## **MAY NEWS MONITOR**

**PAX CHRISTI CALL FOR US TO ACT AS "HONEST BROKER":** The international Catholic peace movement Pax Christi called on Israel to end its military occupation of Palestine and urged the United States to work within the framework of international law and act as an honest broker to support Palestinians and Israelis equally in developing trust-building measures.

**POPE CONDEMNS TORTURE AS AFFRONT TO HUMANS:** Pope John Paul II condemned torture as an intolerable affront to human dignity, lamenting that reports of abuses "constantly arrive from all continents".

**INDIGENOUS HEALTH ALARM:** Brisbane's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission urged Catholics to pressure Australia's political leaders to deal with the widening gap in health standards between Indigenous and other Australians.

**CARITAS DIABETES PROJECT:** Caritas Australia issued a Sorry Day statement to stress its commitment to funding projects to help control diabetes in Aboriginal communities.

**JESUIT SAYS NATIVE TITLE "HERE TO STAY":** In the inaugural Eddie Koiki Mabo Lecture at Townsville's James Cook University, Jesuit human rights advocate Fr Frank Brennan observed that the Australian community firmly accepted the social justice principles behind native title legislation, twelve years after the landmark Mabo decision that recognised native title for the first time.

**SORRY DAY CALL TO REANIMATE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION:** On the eve of Sorry Day, Brisbane's Archdiocesan Catholic Justice and Peace Commission urged Catholics to be involved in the action to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

**CHRISTIAN BROTHERS LEADER WRITES TO PM ON TIMOR SEA OIL:** Br Peter Dowling, the Christian Brothers' Province Leader for Victoria/Tasmania, wrote to Prime Minister John Howard seeking a change in Australia's stance in relation to its claim over the oil and gas resources in the Timor Sea.

**JESUIT CRITICISES INADEQUATE RESPONSE TO PRISONER HEALTH NEEDS:** Fr Peter Norden of Jesuit Social Services commented on a study that reveals that Victoria's prison system is ill-equipped to cope with the health needs of prisoners.

**BISHOPS STRESS URGENCY OF SEARCH FOR DETENTION ALTERNATIVES:** Australia's Catholic Bishops have said that the Government and citizens of Australia must, as a mat-

ter of urgency, find alternatives to detention for unaccompanied minors and for children who accompany their parents.

**ASYLUM SEEKER CHILDREN IN LIMBO:** Adelaide's Centacare Catholic Welfare agency said the lives of the Bakhtiyari children are on hold until Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone decides their future later this month.

**JOSEPHITE SUPPORT FOR TIMOR SEA BOUNDARY RETHINK:** The Mary MacKillop Institute of East Timorese Studies has thrown its weight behind the campaign to persuade the Australian Government to revise its previous agreement with the Indonesian Government in favour of a more equitable sharing of Timor Sea oil revenue with East Timor.

**NZ BISHOP DRAWS LINE BETWEEN INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND RACE DISTINCTION:** Bishop Peter Cullinane of Palmerston North said there's been a blurring of the difference between a claim to privilege based on race, and the claim to rights based on indigenous status.

**VATICAN SAYS COMMON GOOD OUTWEIGHS DRUG COMPANY PATENTS:** Drug companies' rights to make a profit and protect patents can conflict with people's right to needed medicines and care, said a Vatican official at a symposium attended by generic pharmaceutical companies.

**JAKARTA CARDINAL SAYS CHOOSE PRESIDENT WITH CLEAR PROGRAMS:** In a departure from its usual practice of detachment from the election process, the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Indonesia (KWI) presented guidelines to the country's Catholic community on how to choose presidential candidates.

**BUDGET NON-EVENT FOR POOR BUT GOVT DELIVERS ON AGED CARE:** Fr Joe Caddy of Catholic Welfare Australia said the Government's choice to offer an election year Federal Budget tax break only to high income

earners "shows that the votes of the poor are not worth buying".

**VINNIES' BUDGET PLEA TO COSTELLO TO THINK OF POOR:** The NSW State President of the St Vincent de Paul Society called on Federal Treasurer Peter Costello to make tonight's Federal Budget statement provide for the dignity of Australia's most vulnerable.

**HREOC BACKS ADELAIDE CENTACARE ON ASYLUM-SEEKER CHILDREN'S SUFFERING:** A Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report showed many asylum seeker children suffer from mental health problems including anxiety, bed-wetting, nightmares, emotional numbing and suicidal thoughts.

**CATHOLIC BODY URGES A BETTER DEAL FOR THE LOW PAID:** The Catholic Church's employment relations body described the \$19.00 per week increase to the Federal Minimum Wage announced on Wednesday as just one of many necessary advances for low paid workers.

**CATHOLIC OFFICE SAYS VIC BUDGET WILL HELP POOR:** The Victorian State Budget indicated the Bracks Government is listening to the needs of disadvantaged Victorians, according to Fr Joe Caddy, Social Policy Director at Catholic Social Services Victoria.

**CENTACARE EMPLOYMENT ACHIEVES OUTSTANDING RESULTS:** Catholic Welfare Australia commended Centacare Employment sites for their outstanding results in the Job Network Star ratings, with 70% of sites achieving 4 stars or more.

**CATHOLIC HEALTH SAYS SURPLUS COULD END MEDICARE PAIN FOR AUSTRALIA'S POOR:** Catholic Health Australia used higher than expected Federal Budget surplus projections to argue that the Government is not doing its best to improve the capacity of Medicare to meet the costs of a GP visit for most Australians.



- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews,  
stories in detail at  
<http://www.cathnews.com/news/405>

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## **JUNE SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR**

### **JUNE 5 WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY**

Prayer for Today

*Creator of the universe,*

*we pray in gratitude and praise.*

*You were there at the beginning of all  
things,*

*shaping our world, and preparing it for  
us.*

*You have provided the mountains and  
the trees,*

*the waters and the earth.*

*Help us to be caretakers of your gifts,  
protecting the land from abuse,*

*and ready to share with all in need.*

*Show us how to use our science and  
technology*

*in creative, not destructive ways.*

*Deepen our awareness of our connected-  
ness with all your creation,*

*so that future generations will also enjoy  
every blessing.*

*Amen.*

Michael Gormly SSC (ACSJC Prayer  
Card)

Peace, ecology and justice are intercon-  
nected. To cultivate a culture of peace,  
we need to be living in harmony with  
ourselves, others, our God and the natural  
world.

There is a growing awareness that  
world peace is threatened not only by  
the arms race, regional conflicts and  
continued injustice among peoples and  
nations, but also by a lack of due respect  
for nature.

- Pope John Paul II, *World Day of Peace  
Message 1990*

For more information:  
<http://www.catholicearthcareoz.net>

### **JUNE 12 WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR**

This day focuses world attention on the  
urgent need to eradicate child labour,  
remembering the children and com-

memorating those who work to bring  
about a world without child labour.

On this day, UNICEF and the Interna-  
tional Labour Organization have also  
highlighted the need to focus attention  
on trafficking in children, wherever it  
occurs and in whatever form, in order to  
prevent and stop the practice.

It is estimated that the global trade in  
human beings is beginning to rival the  
illicit trafficking of arms and drugs, with  
an estimated revenue of \$12 billion a  
year, according to a 2003 International  
Labour Organization report.

Far from home or in a foreign country,  
trafficked children are disoriented, with-  
out papers, and excluded from any pro-  
tective environment and can be forced to  
endure prostitution, domestic servitude,  
early and involuntary marriage, or haz-  
ardous and punishing labour.

For more information:  
<http://www.unicef.org>; <http://www.ilo.org>

### **JUNE 16 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD**

In Soweto, South Africa, thousands of  
black school children took to the streets  
in 1976, in a march more than half a  
mile long, to protest the inferior quality  
of their education and to demand their  
right to be taught in their own language.  
Hundreds of young boys and girls were  
shot down, and in the two weeks of pro-  
test that followed, more than a hundred  
people were killed and more than a  
thousand were injured.

This day honours the memory of those  
killed and the courage of all those who  
marched. It also draws attention to the  
lives of African children today.

### **JUNE 20 WORLD REFUGEE DAY**

The purpose of World Refugee Day is to  
draw attention to the plight of refugees,  
celebrate their courage and resilience,  
and renew commitment to solving refu-  
gee problems. It is also an opportunity to  
recognise the contribution which refu-  
gees make to the countries that host  
them.

The United Nations High Commissioner  
for Refugees (UNHCR) cares for 20 mil-  
lion refugees, asylum seekers and inter-  
nally displaced persons, of whom ap-  
proximately 7 million are young people  
between the ages of 12 and 24. Not only  
do refugee youth face the difficulties all

refugees encounter, but they are also submitted to particular hardships because of their young age and specific vulnerability. Separation, exploitation, abuse and violence, exposure to AIDS/HIV, military recruitment, and lack of access to education are some of the dire challenges they have to meet.

### **RECOGNISING DIFFERENCE AS GIFT**

People from many lands have enriched Australia, creating a multicultural nation. Culture, language, religion and nationality provide us with identity and self-confidence, shaping our relationships with one another and the world. We can delight in our own heritage and culture while recognising the contribution other cultures can make to Australia.

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