



# ACSJC BRIEFING

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*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,

This year, Christians in Australia are being invited to devote a 10-day period to pray intentionally for both reconciliation in this country and for the visible expression of unity amongst Christians. This period of prayer and activity includes National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It commenced last Friday, Sorry Day, and concludes next Sunday, Pentecost Sunday.

One opportunity that this period provides for all members of our community is to consider ways in which we can heal the wounds of the past and foster a shared future. It is just at this time, however, that a heated and often divisive debate about crime, law and order, and the economic viability of remote Indigenous communities has been cast in the spotlight.

### **ENTITLED TO LIVE WITHOUT FEAR OF VIOLENCE**

Responding to reports of violence and rape against women and children in Indigenous communities, Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Mal Brough called a meeting of Federal, State and Territory Government representatives to establish a National Plan of Action Against Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse. Minister Brough stated the objectives of a national response: "I want people to actually have enough confidence to be able to do in perpetrators, and

to be able to stand in a court and give evidence, and know they're not going to have crimes committed against them.

"They are the two things, if we don't get to that level, that basic level of confidence in a criminal justice system, and policing, then we're never going to get rid of the criminals out of these communities, and no-one's ever going to feel safe," the Minister said. (refer:

[http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/Minister3.nsf/content/2ue\\_transcript\\_18may06.htm](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/Minister3.nsf/content/2ue_transcript_18may06.htm))

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, said that, just as in non-Indigenous society, this type of criminal behaviour should not be tolerated in Indigenous society. "All people must respect and honour human rights and abide by the rule of law. Indigenous women and children are entitled to live without fear of violence or abuse and should have the full protection of the law. This type of behaviour has no place in Aboriginal culture and customary law is no excuse to condone such behaviour," he said.

## **THE PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS LEADERS AND COMMUNITIES ESSENTIAL**

Mr Calma called on Government to investigate this issue properly and ensure underlying causes are addressed. "Now that Mr Brough and others have brought these issues to the attention of the world, the questions are: What are they going to do about it? What is the Minister going to do to assist the victims of these crimes? ... How is he proposing to involve Indigenous people in the solutions and what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that these long-known and widely-reported atrocities are sustainably addressed?"

Mr Calma said that governments need to work with communities and families to identify solutions to the socio-economic factors that impact on violence in communities, such as improved housing and living conditions, creating meaningful employment, recreation facilities and general community health education programs. ([http://www.hreoc.gov.au/media\\_releases/2006/28\\_06.htm](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/media_releases/2006/28_06.htm))

Prominent Elder Lowitja O'Donoghue spoke of the struggles of remote Indigenous communities over recent decades and questioned whether there is the political and community will to thoroughly address the issues.

"Aboriginal people tell me their spirits are broken. That's the term they use. Their spirits are broken. They don't know where to turn. They don't know who to talk to. They don't understand the programs. They don't understand this mainstream, whole-of-government approach that is the new way of doing things," she said.

Dr O'Donoghue has emphasised the importance of Aboriginal leaders being involved in any initiatives to address the issues at the national and community level.

"I get very emotional when I talk about this because I'm one of these people who has worked all my life for my people. I find people don't value my experience, don't value what I can contribute, and I think 'How much more can I do?'"

(refer: <http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/sa/content/2006/s1649938.htm>;  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200605/s1648818.htm>)

Gary Highland, national director of Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) has emphasised that a major national effort needs to involve governments and Indigenous communities as equal partners to overcome the crisis of violence that has overtaken many Aboriginal communities.

"The Minister's call is similar to what many Indigenous leaders have been saying for some time – that Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities have to face up to the reality of this situation and take urgent action to overcome it."

Mr Highland said that Indigenous leaders from across the political spectrum, including Mick Dodson, Larissa Behrendt, Warren Mundine, Sue Gordon, John Ah Kit, Tom Calma, Boni Robertson and Rob Welsh, have frequently spoken out on this issue in the past, but their calls have been largely ignored by successive governments.

"What is needed is a comprehensive national response that involves Indigenous communities in the solutions." He warned against an approach where solutions are imposed over the top by government. (refer:

[http://www.antar.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=232&Itemid=97](http://www.antar.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=232&Itemid=97))

### **AUSTRALIA HAS "NO RIGHT TO BE SURPRISED"**

Bishop Christopher Saunders, Bishop of Broome and chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council said that the issue is not a new one and society has "no right to be surprised".

"Unemployment, third world health standards, a chronic public housing crisis and substance abuse combine to defeat the well-being of families and the promise of peace."

"One common denominator among all Aboriginal communities is their poverty and social injustice. You've marginalised people, you leave them on the outer, you don't nurture them and you don't nourish them; it is no wonder these things are happening."

"The poverty and feeling of powerlessness has become a real force and it's in that sort of environment that you get abuse.

"When you're at the bottom of the socio economic ladder and economic systems are trying to keep you there, or just not offering any sense of hope, you really have to be a strong person with a lot of determination to be above that," he said.

The Bishop called on Government to boost the economic structure in remote areas to address poverty and improve family support and community development.

(<http://www.catholicweekly.com.au/article.php?classID=1&subclassID=2&articleID=1937&class=News&subclass=National>)

### **THE NEED FOR A PROPER RESPONSE**

Fr Brian McCoy SJ has worked with Aboriginal communities, including Wadeye, for over 30 years. He says the focus must move beyond sensationalist reporting that portrays all Aboriginal society as "violent and dysfunctional".

"A few days ago, a group of senior Aboriginal men who over many years have committed themselves to these issues sent out a press release. They condemned the violence absolutely... they called on governments to support men to do this. The voices of these men, my professional colleagues and friends, have largely not been heard in the recent media coverage. It is easier to depict violence and to stop at the sensational moment. It is much harder to converse seriously with those who are trying to deal with violence and to stop it."

Fr McCoy highlights the lived experience of men in these communities. "When housing is overcrowded, unemployment is high, resources are scarce and there are few healthy older people to guide them, what kind of adults can they become?"

"Should we put the full weight of intervention on law and order, or does putting men into prison make them more, or less, violent?"

Focusing on prevention he asked, "Where, in the 2006 Budget for Indigenous Affairs do we find support for Aboriginal men's groups and programs? What encouragement is given to young fathers and babies, to complement that given to young mothers and babies? Where do we find the conversation, partnership and support for those men who are making a difference?"

"Whether the issue be petrol sniffing, violence, alcohol or sexual abuse, the media now tend to sensationalise and marginalize all Aboriginal men, and to present all Aboriginal society as violent and dysfunctional... We find it easier to talk about Aboriginal people than to talk with them; we prefer negative stereotypes to the challenge of forming partnerships," he said.

(<http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=864>)

Speaking in the lead up to Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week, Patrick Dodson called for an adequate response to the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse that many Aboriginal individuals and communities have endured for a long time.

"Before jumping to solutions, we need to ask the question: Why? Police presence and incarceration may provide a short-term fix, but it won't answer the question: Why is this happening? ... Without serious consideration, populist responses will only increase arrests and incarceration rates, neither of which has delivered rehabilitation or improvement to the fundamental ontological dilemmas.

"We do come from different cultures and have different laws. But, ultimately, we possess a common humanity. It is our respective uniqueness that offers us the opportunity for reconciliation if we have the courage to engage in dialogue. We must delve further to discover why we have not achieved better outcomes to such challenges, and in doing so come to a deeper understanding of why reconciliation is necessary and beneficial," he said.

(<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/printpage/0,5942,19255931,00.html>)

## **THE CALL FOR RECONCILIATION**

This deeper question relating to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians was raised by the Holy Father when he welcomed Australia's new Ambassador to the Holy See on 18 May. After commending Australia's efforts for international peace through the commitment of peace-keeping forces and aid initiatives, he spoke of the need for justice and peace at home. Reconciliation with Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders was his focus.

"In regard to the Aboriginal people of your land, there is still much to be achieved. Their social situation is cause for much pain. I encourage you and the Government to continue to address with compassion and determination the deep underlying causes of their plight. Commitment to truth opens the way to lasting reconciliation through the healing process of asking for forgiveness and granting forgiveness – two indispensable elements for peace. In this way our memory is purified, our hearts are made serene, and our future is filled with a well-founded hope in the peace which springs from truth."

([http://www.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2006/may/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060518\\_ambassador-australia\\_en.html](http://www.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060518_ambassador-australia_en.html))

Archbishop Barry Hickey, chairman of the Catholic Bishops Commission for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, spoke to ABC's "Lateline" about the Pope's call on the Australian Government. "He's just talking about the principles of reconciliation, that one looks at a situation and says 'Mistakes have been made. We are sorry that they have happened and we ask your forgiveness' and the other party forgives. That's the beginning of reconciliation, so it's more on the

basic process of resolving problems that the Pope is talking about, not on any political situation that might exist in Australia."

Commenting on the level of determination to address the causes of disadvantage to which the Holy Father referred, Archbishop Hickey said, "But I don't think there's much determination. Plenty of words, millions of dollars of money, and yet, we hear that there's not enough money, as if money is going to solve it. I think determination needs to be increased now to do something about the social situation, the family break-up, the violence, the addictions... Not all Aboriginal people are like that of course we know but there are too many communities where they have no hope."

He called for the personal commitment of Australians to foster a shared future of hope. "We can't leave everything to the Government. The Government can deal with structures, can provide money, can provide programs, but the heart, the compassion, the forgiveness, the reconciliation has to be done by ordinary people getting together, speaking to each other, making friends, and together moving ahead. Without that personal element, I don't think anything can succeed," said Archbishop Hickey. (<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2006/s1645758.htm>)

As we engage in this 10-day period of prayer for reconciliation in this country and for the visible expression of unity amongst Christians, it becomes clear that all of us have a role to play in addressing with compassion and determination the deep underlying causes of the challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

*John Ferguson*  
*National Executive Officer*

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## **CURRENT ISSUES/RESOURCES**

### **NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CATHOLIC COUNCIL – "DREAMING FROM THE HEART"**

NATSICC is planning to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Pope John Paul II's visit to Alice Springs by holding its National Assembly in the Red Centre, 2 – 7 October 2006. The original visit occurred in 1986 and was the venue for one of the Pope's most important speeches, his address to Aboriginal people. For more information about this event and how you can be involved and to find out about the Message Stick Relay in your part of Australia, visit:  
<http://www.natsicc.org.au>

### **NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ECUMENICAL COMMISSION – "MAKE INDIGENOUS POVERTY HISTORY".**

The Make Indigenous Poverty History campaign aims to ensure that the global campaign supporting the Millennium Development Goals does not overlook the poverty suffered by Indigenous Peoples around the world including Australia. The goals do not specifically target Indigenous Peoples but Indigenous Peoples are often the ones most affected by extreme poverty and usually rank at the bottom of most social and economic indicators. The campaign invites us to compare the living standards and levels of health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with those of the rest of Australia – not to the poorest of the world's poor. To find out more about the campaign visit:  
[http://www.ncca.org.au/natsieec/indigenous\\_poverty](http://www.ncca.org.au/natsieec/indigenous_poverty)

## **CARITAS APPEALS – INDONESIA AND TIMOR LESTE**

Caritas Australia is responding to the need of people in Central Java who have already been impacted by the impending eruption of the Mt Merapi volcano. Locals fear that this earthquake will be a trigger for the eruption. Caritas agencies already have pre-positioned resources in Central Java in the event of displacement of the people living in the surrounding regions of the erupting volcano. The initial response to the earthquake has involved the use of the local Catholic network, including the use of Church buildings as temporary refuges for the many displaced survivors and providing the people with food, non-food items and first aid assistance. (refer:

<http://www.caritas.org.au/emergencies/indonesiaEarthquake.htm>)

In East Timor, the recent period of unrest started at the end of April, over 12,000 people have fled their homes. Many have taken refuge in Churches, convents and other Catholic institutions. Caritas Australia is providing displaced families with clothing, bedding, hygiene kits and specific children's materials. In particular assistance is being concentrated on the area around Taci Tolu, where historically Caritas had intervened with a shelter program. The plan is to provide semi-permanent housing for around 50 families whose houses have been burned down during the recent unrest. (refer:

<http://www.caritas.org.au/emergencies/eastTimor.htm>)

Caritas will accept your kind donation online with Visa, MasterCard, Amex, Diner's Club or Bankcard. Or call the toll-free number 1800 024 413.

## **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2006 – THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S HUMAN RIGHTS.**

Speaking at the launch of Amnesty International Report 2006, Secretary General Irene Khan said that the security agenda of the powerful and privileged had hijacked the energy and attention of the world from serious human rights crises elsewhere. "Governments collectively and individually paralysed international institutions and squandered public resources in pursuit of narrow security interests, sacrificed principles in the name of the "war on terror" and turned a blind eye to massive human rights violations" said Ms Khan. The full report can be downloaded at the Amnesty International website:

<http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/index-eng> The regional overview for Australia can be viewed at: <http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/aus-summary-eng>

## **NEW WEB JOURNAL: "OIKONOMIA"**

Oikonomia is the Sydney College of Divinity ejournal of theology, ministry and the arts. It is named for the new testament word indicating a plan (oikonomia) for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth (Eph 1:10). Oikonomia is published twice a year, in April and October. All articles are refereed by the Editorial Board and associates. The ejournal is in process of being listed in the Register of Refereed Journals published by the Dept. of Education, Science and Training. Editorial Board Dr Matthew Del Nevo, Broken Bay Institute Dr Stuart Devenish, Australian College of Ministries Associate Professor Mark Hutchinson, Southern Cross College Associate Professor Gerard Moore, editor, Sydney College of Divinity All correspondence, including articles, book reviews and advertising to the editor: [gmoore@scd.edu.au](mailto:gmoore@scd.edu.au) For further info or to contribute an article visit the website: <http://oikon.webjournals.org>

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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>)*

### **2006 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY**

The ACSJC's 2006 Social Justice Diary, Seasons of Social Justice, focuses on social justice for Indigenous people. An excellent resource for parishes, schools and social justice groups, the diary is an educational and spiritual resource. Cost: \$6.60 (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)

### **PASTORAL LETTER: THE VOICE OF VULNERABLE WORKERS IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK**

The Pastoral Letter issued by Bishop Christopher Saunders for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker in 2006 is available and can be downloaded from the ACSJC website: [www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)

### **ACSJC BACKGROUND PAPER: STOLEN WAGES – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR JUSTICE?**

This Background paper provides basic information on the circumstances facing many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and families seeking wages they were not paid for years of work. The Paper is available on the ACSJC's website:

[http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/pdf/2006\\_1\\_23stolen\\_wages\\_-\\_an\\_opportunity\\_for\\_justice.pdf](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/pdf/2006_1_23stolen_wages_-_an_opportunity_for_justice.pdf)

### **ACSJC DISCUSSION GUIDE: WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE**

The discussion guide consists of: an overview of the Pope's message; some points for reflection and discussion; a prayer; and a guide to additional resources. It is available on the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

### **SERIES PAPER: FROM MONEY TO MEANING: YOUNG PEOPLE AND WORK**

Catholic Social Justice Series No.56 – the Australian Young Christian Workers addresses the issue of young people and casual work. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage) (postage rates listed below)

### **SERIES PAPER: A LOVE THAT DOES JUSTICE**

Catholic Social Justice Series No. 55 – Fr Neil Brown discusses the fundamental issues of charity, morality, love and justice in the Christian life. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage) (postage rates listed below)

### **2005 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT**

The Australian Catholic Bishops' 2005 Social Justice Sunday Statement is entitled "Jesus, Light for the World – Living the Gospel today". The ACSJC is still taking orders of 10 or more for the Statement. An order form is available on the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

The Statement can be downloaded at: <http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/latest.html>  
and  
[http://www.acsjc.org.au/CONTENT/publications/documentation/documentation\\_sjs01.html](http://www.acsjc.org.au/CONTENT/publications/documentation/documentation_sjs01.html)

## **LEAFLET & PRAYER CARD: TEN STEPS TOWARDS LIVING THE GOSPEL TODAY**

Call (02) 9956 5811

*(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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## **JUNE NOTICES**

**MAY 27 – JUNE 3: NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK** (National). The theme of National Reconciliation Week is "Reconciliation: take the next step". Further info can be found at <http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/cms.isp?page=97> or <http://www.alphalink.com.au/~rez/Journey/index.htm>

**JUNE 1: SEMINAR, "WEST PAPUA - WHAT NEXT?"** (NSW). The International Commission of Jurists are running a seminar on legal issues facing West Papuans. Speakers include: Justice Elizabeth Evatt AC, ICJ Commissioner; Dr Peter King, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney; two of the 42 recently recognised refugees from West Papua; and Dr Mary Crock, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law University of Sydney. Chaired by the Hon John Dowd AO QC. 5.15pm at Theatre, Parliament of New South Wales, Macquarie St, Sydney. Entry by donation. No RSVP required. For further info contact: [forums@icj-aust.org.au](mailto:forums@icj-aust.org.au) (refer: [www.ICJ-Aust.org.au](http://www.ICJ-Aust.org.au))

**JUNE 2: FUNDRAISER, "SHINE DAY"** (NSW). Youth Off The Streets "Shine Day" is the fundraising day aiming to raise \$1 million to support its services in Australia. Youth Off The Streets is recruiting volunteers to sell badges on the day. If you can help please email [emilyg@youthoffthestreets.com.au](mailto:emilyg@youthoffthestreets.com.au) with your details or visit <http://www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/events/index.html>

**JUNE 2: POLITICS IN THE PUB, "EAST TIMOR – FINDING THE PATH OUT OF POVERTY"** (NSW). Speakers, Abel Gueterres, Consul General for Timor Leste and John Dowd, AO, QC, President Australian Section, International Commission of Jurists, Chancellor, Southern Cross University. 6.00 – 7.45pm, The Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St. Surry Hills, Sydney. (refer: <http://www.politicsinthepub.org>)

**JUNE 3: FORUM, "HUMAN TRAFFICKING: STOP SLAVERY!"** (NSW). Between 700,000 and two million persons are trafficked globally each year. Australia is a country of destination. The Sisters of Charity Advocacy Network is running this morning event to provide an opportunity for reflection, information sharing and ideas for action. Presenters are Dr Jennifer Burn and Sr Margaret Ng rsj. 9.30am to 12 noon, at the Edmund Rice Centre, 9 Alexandra Ave,

Croydon, Sydney. RSVP by 1 June to Sr Suzette Clark rsc on (02) 9954 1788 or seclark@bigpond.com.au. (refer: www.scan.org.au)

**JUNE 3: FORUM, "SEEING THE WORLD AS IT SHOULD BE! CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING"** (NSW). The Justice and Peace Office of the Archdiocese of Sydney, in cooperation with the Life Office and the Marriage and Family Office, is holding the first in a series of four forums for young adults. This one explores the principle of human dignity. Speakers at the forum are: Bishop Anthony Fisher, Fr Gerry Gleeson, Dr Michael Costigan and Dr Catherine Althaus. 10.00am to 4.30pm, St Mary's Cathedral College Hall, Sydney. For further info call (02) 9390 5283 or visit <http://www.lifeoffice.org.au/current.html>

**JUNE 3: ECUMENICAL SERVICE FOR RECONCILIATION WEEK** (Qld). Queensland Churches Together has organised a service as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation. 5.00pm at St John's Anglican Cathedral, Ann St, Brisbane. For further info contact robertsontony@yahoo.com . (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/brisbane/calendar/?display=zoom&event=534>)

**JUNE 4: FORUM, "A CHURCH THAT WON'T BE SILENCED"** (NSW). The second New Pentecost Forum will bring together church groups and individuals interested in networking in church and civic life for genuine dialogue, a spirituality for liberation and social justice, action for human rights. Speakers include theologians Dr Gemma Cruz (Philippines), Dr Edmund Chia (Malaysia), historian Dr Paul Collins, business leader Hind Kourouche and Uniting Church minister Rod Pattenden. All day forum 10.30am to 7.30pm. Evening public lecture 6.00 to 7.30pm. Ryan Auditorium and Carroll building, Australian Catholic University, North Sydney Campus (40 Edward St). To express your interest or pre-register contact 0403 181 586 or newpentecost@gmail.com (refer: [www.newpentecost.com](http://www.newpentecost.com))

**JUNE 5: LECTURE, "DOES RELIGION CAUSE VIOLENCE?"** (NSW). Prominent US Catholic theologian William T. Cavanaugh will examine the myth that religion causes violence. Dr Cavanaugh claims that the primary myth in academic circles, in the media, and to the man or the woman in the street is that religion is inherently violent. In light of current world events, Dr Cavanaugh will re-imagine the stereotypes that have developed and will address the questions – do religions really cause violence? And how as a community can we build a culture of peace in a world dominated by a spiral of violence? 8.00pm, Parliament Theatre, NSW Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney. Admission is free. However bookings for limited tickets are essential. Please contact ASAP by email: markoconnorfms@gmail.com or phone 0401 222 596

**JUNE 6: LECTURE, "DOES RELIGION CAUSE VIOLENCE?"** (NSW). 4.00 – 6.00pm, St Patrick's Cathedral Hall, Parramatta. Bookings essential. Contact (02) 9840 5673 or mary.brogan@parra.catholic.edu.au (refer: <http://www.parra.catholic.org.au/Helder%20Camara.htm>)

**JUNE 6: LECTURE, "THE WEAPONS DETECTIVE"** (NSW). Rod Barton first became involved in investigating Iraq's use of chemical weapons in 1983. Following the first Gulf War, Rod became involved in the United Nations weapons inspections. Rod Barton will be speaking on his forthcoming book, "The

Weapons Detective", in a free public lecture hosted by the Centre for Peace & Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney. 6.30pm (doors open at 6.00pm), the Footbridge Theatre, Parramatta Rd, The University of Sydney. Entry by donation. RSVP on (02) 9351 7686. (refer: <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/centres/cpacs/seminars.htm>)

**JUNE 6: EVENT, "THE ANNUAL WOMEN'S NIGHT OF SPIRITUALITY"** (NSW). An evening of story and song. Personal experiences of spirituality and the finding of meaning of women through their lived experience. Hosted by Geraldine Doogue and speakers Stephanie Dowrick, Dani Haski and Ann Austin. 7.30pm – 9.30pm, St Mary's Church, 264 Miller Street, North Sydney. Donation at the door for several worthy charities, no RSVP is needed and all women and men are welcome. (Refer: <http://www.cacw.catholic.org.au/news/cww.asp?id=574>)

**JUNE 7: SEMINAR, "AUSTRALIANS AND THE DEATH PENALTY: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS"** (NSW). A seminar presented by the Institute of Criminology and the Sydney Centre for International and Global Law. Session 1: 'Off-shore Policing and Death Penalty Punishments' (3-5pm). Session 2: 'International Perspectives on the Death Penalty' (5.30-7.30pm). Registration: \$50, \$15 concession. 7 June 2006, NSW Parliament House Theatre, Macquarie St, Sydney. (refer: <http://www.criminology.law.usyd.edu.au/seminars.htm#forthcoming>)

**JUNE 7: PUBLIC FORUM, "WORKCHOICES OR JUSTICE AT WORK?"** (Vic). A church, community and union organised event addressing the nature and implications of the Federal Government's WorkChoices and welfare-to-work regime. Speakers include: Fr Bob Maguire; Maureen Postma, General Secretary of the Victorian Council of Churches; Fr Bruce Duncan; Chris Walton of the ACTU; Brian Boyd of the Vic. Trades Hall Council; Sally James of Melbourne City Mission; Rev. David Pargeter of the Uniting Church; and, Rev. Canon Ray Cleary of Anglicare Victoria. 6:30 – 9.00pm, Melbourne Town Hall, Crn Collins and Swanston St, City. For further info contact [davekerin@unionsolidariy.org](mailto:davekerin@unionsolidariy.org) or 0412 484 094. (refer: [http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/calendar/event\\_display\\_detail.php?event\\_id=1729&day=7&month=6&year=2006](http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/calendar/event_display_detail.php?event_id=1729&day=7&month=6&year=2006))

**JUNE 7: LECTURE, "THE SACRIFICE OF LOVE - THE EUCHARIST IN A TORTURED WORLD"** (Qld). Public lecture by Dr William Cavanaugh, 7.30 – 9.00pm at the O'Shea Centre, Lovedale St, Wilston. Cost: \$20, students and non-waged \$15. (refer: <http://www.bne.catholic.net.au/mission/education.htm>)

**JUNE 7: DISCUSSION GROUP, "INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE USE OF FORCE"** (ACT). The Centre for International and Public Law at the ANU is hosting this group to be led in discussion by Dr Michael Smith Visiting Fellow, ANU College of Law. He will focus on the present status and emerging trends in the norms governing the use of force under the United Nations Charter and customary international law. Particular regard will be paid to aspects of the UN Secretary General's Report "in Larger Freedom" of 2005, and future challenges to international conflict management. 1.00pm, Staff Library, Level 1, ANU College of Law, (Bldg 5), cnr Fellows & East Roads, The Australian National University. RSVP to: [cipl@law.anu.edu.au](mailto:cipl@law.anu.edu.au) (refer: <http://law.anu.edu.au/cipl/events.asp>)

**JUNE 8: LAUNCH, "NEW MATILDA 'OUR COMMON WEALTH' PROJECT"** (NSW). New Matilda says the launch of this project marks the beginning of a shift in Australia's public policy debate. Too often policies are ad hoc, thrown together in time for an election campaign or developed in response to the latest political crisis. It's time for policies based on Australia's long term interests and values. Join Wendy Harmer, as the MC, Quentin Dempster, ABC journalist, John Robertson, Unions NSW, Virginia Young, The Wilderness Society, Professor John Dwyer, UNSW, Professor Denise Bradley, Vice Chancellor, UniSA, and John Menadue AO, Chair, New Matilda. 12 noon to 1.00pm, Jubilee Room, State Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney. RSVP by Thursday 8th June to (02) 9211 1635 or [commonwealth@newmatilda.com](mailto:commonwealth@newmatilda.com)

**JUNE 8: LECTURE, "DOES RELIGION CAUSE VIOLENCE?"** (Qld). Public lecture by Dr William Cavanaugh sponsored by the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane. 7.30 – 9.00pm, St Mary's Church, 185 Billingham Rd, Upper Coomera. (refer: <http://www.bne.catholic.net.au/mission/education.htm>)

**JUNE 9: FORUM, "REMEMBRANCE OF ONE GOD IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY"** (NSW). This event organised by the Affinity Intercultural Foundation and Australian Christian Meditation Community will explore aspects of prayer, remembrance and worship of God from the perspective of Islam and Christianity. Speakers include Fr Laurence Freeman OSB, Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, and Mehmet Ozalp, Author and President of the Affinity Intercultural Foundation. 7:15 for 7:30pm start, Riverside Theatre – Cnr of Church St & Market St, Parramatta. \$15 per person on entry. Preregistration is preferred. Contact on (02) 9702 0789 or [palmy@ozemail.com.au](mailto:palmy@ozemail.com.au) (refer: [www.affinity.org.au](http://www.affinity.org.au))

**JUNE 9: CHARITY CONCERT, "HEALING' MULTI-FAITH UNITY IN DIVERSITY"** (Vic). A Multi-faith Charity Concert attracting all faiths & cultures for a celebration of Unity in Diversity. UNESCO Clubs Australia, UNESCO Observatory & COMMON present: 'Dya Singh World Music Group'; An Aboriginal Healing ceremony led by Uncle Reg Blow; A Charismatic Sudanese Catholic Choir; The Spine-tingling sound of Parvyn Kaur Singh. 7.00pm - 9.30pm, Carillo Gantner, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, University of Melbourne, Swanston Street. For bookings please call 0424 391396 or email: [bookings@ekit.com](mailto:bookings@ekit.com). A minimum \$10 donation will be requested on the night to help with UNESCO Clubs Australia aid projects (currently supplying computers to children in the Pacific Islands), farming projects and other multi-faith activities. Contact 0424 391 396 or [bookings@ekit.com](mailto:bookings@ekit.com). (refer: [http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whats happening\\_events\\_view.php?id=519BD33E-AD1C-D0F1-60C1BAD2F3F639B](http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whats happening_events_view.php?id=519BD33E-AD1C-D0F1-60C1BAD2F3F639B))

**JUNE 9: SEMINAR, "ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF AUSTRALIAN DEPORTATION"** (Vic). Dr Glenn Nicholls is presenting this seminar on Australian law and policy on deportation. 1.00pm - 2.00pm at the Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University, Hawthorn. Contact 0433 193 021 or [gnicholls@swin.edu.au](mailto:gnicholls@swin.edu.au) for information, enquiries or attendance. (refer: [http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whats happening\\_events\\_view.php?id=4F63666D-BCA3-D792-09B812A5F675615F](http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whats happening_events_view.php?id=4F63666D-BCA3-D792-09B812A5F675615F))

**JUNE 12: FORUM, "SOCIAL AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY"** (Qld). Early in March 2006, an esteemed member of Griffith University's community, Elder in Residence, Aunty Delmae Barton, suffered a stroke at a Queensland Busway interchange. Several hours - and many commuters - passed by before, finally, some students assisted her and alerted Griffith security at the nearby campus. In societies around the world we witness almost daily the breakdown of community. Is social apathy and a lack of social and civic responsibility the most dangerous "disease" of the new millennium? A range of speaker including Prof. Toh Swee-Hin, Sr Trish Madigan OP, Prof. Drew Nesdale, Associate Prof Boni Robertson, and Kate Morioka will address the issues. 5.30 - 7.45pm, Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University Nathan campus Kessels Rd, Nathan, Brisbane. For more info contact (07) 3735 7818 or [j.finigan@griffith.edu.au](mailto:j.finigan@griffith.edu.au) (refer: [http://www.griffith.edu.au/er/scr\\_forum\\_invitation.pdf](http://www.griffith.edu.au/er/scr_forum_invitation.pdf) )

**JUNE 13: PUBLIC LECTURE, "LIVING DIVERSITY: RETHINKING MULTICULTURALISM"** (NSW). Dr Greg Noble of the Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney will deliver this lecture in the Social Policy & Research Centre seminar series. 1.00 to 2.30pm, Room 25, Building G2, SPRC Western Grounds, University of New South Wales. To confirm the location, date, and time of a seminar, call (02) 9385 7803 or (02) 9385 7802. (refer: <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/seminars/2006s1.htm>)

**JUNE 13: PUBLIC LECTURE, "WAR AND PEACE – AN ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE"** (ACT). The Centre for International and Public Law at the Australian National University, and the Israeli Embassy present Professor Asher Maoz of the Tel Aviv University Law School who will examine the international legal implications of the practice of waging war in an age when the use of force in resolving international disputes has been prohibited. To this end, the lecture will probe domestic Israeli law relevant to acts of war and argues that the state can only initiate an offensive war. The legal definition of the confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians since the outbreak of armed hostilities in September 2000, will be discussed. 5.30pm, Law Link Theatre, ANU College of Law, cnr Fellows & East Roads, ANU. RSVP to: [cipl@law.anu.edu.au](mailto:cipl@law.anu.edu.au) by cob 12 June. (refer: <http://law.anu.edu.au/cipl/events.asp>)

**JUNE 14: WORKSHOP, "PROTEST & THE LAW"** (NSW). A free workshop for anyone wanting to be informed about the rights and obligations concerning public protests. The workshop is hosted by the UTS Community Law Centre, in conjunction with the Environmental Defender's Office and NSW Legal Aid Commission. 6:00pm at Building 5, Level 1 Blackfriars Campus UTS. For bookings or more info contact: LAC Co-ordinator Community Legal Education on (02) 9219 5921 or [kirsten.cameron@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kirsten.cameron@legalaid.nsw.gov.au) (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/sydney/calendar/?display=zoom&event=3568>)

**JUNE 15: WORKSHOP, "PROTEST & THE LAW"** (NSW). A free workshop for anyone wanting to be informed about the rights and obligations concerning public protests. 6:00pm, Level 9 Function Room, Wollongong Councils. For more info contact (02) 9219 5921 or [kirsten.cameron@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kirsten.cameron@legalaid.nsw.gov.au) (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/wollongong/calendar/?day=15&month=6>)

**JUNE 15: SEMINAR, "DIVERSITY, DISADVANTAGE, DISCRIMINATION"**

(Vic). S A V E – Australia Inc. in association with Anna Burke MP (Federal Member for Chisholm), Maria Vamvakinou MP, (Federal Member for Calwell) and the Ausnews Global Network cordially invites you to this seminar that will focus on migrants, refugees and racism in Australia. 6.30 – 9.30pm at New Council Chambers, Victorian Trades Hall, 54 Victoria Street, Carlton South. Speakers include: Anna Burke MP; Voula Messimeri of the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council; Bishop Hilton Deakin, Auxiliary Bishop for the Eastern Region; Julian Burnside QC; and, Dr Carmen Lawrence MP. Cost: \$20. Advance booking essential by 10th June. To book call 0422 085 222 or 0417 140 935.

**JUNE 16: POLITICS IN THE PUB, "ASYLUM SEEKERS - THE ISSUES THAT WON'T GO AWAY"** (NSW).

Phil Glendenning, Director of Edmund Rice Centre, Assistant Prof Mary Crock, Law Faculty, Uni Sydney, specialist in immigration/refugee law and Marian Le, Refugee Advocate, discuss current issues of detention, determination and deportation. (refer: <http://www.politicsinthepub.org>)

**JUNE 16: FUNDRAISER, "SWOON IN JUNE FOR REFUGEES"** (Qld).

Fundraiser for Refugee Claimants Support Centre organised by community members of St Mary's Catholic Church in South Brisbane. An evening of music in the gothic, candle-lit ambience of St Mary's Church, cnr Peel & Merivale Sts, South Brisbane. The event will assist people in need to access information and referrals, english classes, emotional support, emergency relief assistance, employment and accommodation assistance. Commences 7.30pm. Tickets available at the door for \$20. For further info contact (07) 3392 0669 or [joalb@bigpond.net.au](mailto:joalb@bigpond.net.au). (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/brisbane/calendar/?day=16&month=6>)

**JUNE 17 – SEPTEMBER 17: EXHIBITION, "UNDER THE BURNING SUN OF THE COLONY"** (Vic).

Sourcing material from the University of Melbourne's archives, the exhibition traces the movement that saw stonemasons at the University cease work and march through the streets of Melbourne. Eight hours labour, eight hours rest and eight hours recreation were their demands. Their campaign ignited an international movement that was centred on the quality of working life and the rights of workers. Tues-Fri 10am-5pm/Sat-Sun 12-5pm at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, Swanston Street between Faraday and Elgin streets, Parkville. Admission is free (refer: <http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au>)

**JUNE 18: CONCERT, THE AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ENSEMBLE IN CONCERT** (NSW).

Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre in conjunction with the Sacre Coeur Alumnae Association invites you, your family and friends to this event from 6.00pm at Kincoppal-Rose Bay Chapel. "Drinks on the Terrace" overlooking Sydney Harbour will be served from 4.45pm for an hour prior to the Concert. Tickets \$75 each. For more info and bookings call (02) 9356 3888. (refer: <http://www.uniya.org/>)

**JUNE 18: FORUM, "SAFE FOOD!"** (NSW).

A MultiFaith Forum on current issues connected with food including the industrialised production of food and genetically engineered food. Keynote speaker Dr Judy Carman, Epidemiologist and senior lecturer at Flinders University WA. Chairperson Noel Debien of Radio

National's Religion Report. Organised by the faith Ecology Network. \$15 per person. 1.00 – 6.30pm Santa Sabina College Hall, 90 The Boulevard, Strathfield, Sydney. For further info call Anne Lanyon, (02) 9352 8021.

**JUNE 20: WORKSHOP, "PROTEST & THE LAW"** (NSW). A free workshop to be run in Newcastle. 6:00pm at Newcastle City Hall, 290 King Street, Newcastle. For more info contact: LAC Co-ordinator Community Legal Education on (02) 9219 5921 or [kirsten.cameron@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kirsten.cameron@legalaid.nsw.gov.au) (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/sydney/calendar/?display=zoom&event=3570>)

**JUNE 25 – JULY 1: WEEK OF ACTION, "YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK"** (National). Details on rallies and events around the nation related to the Federal Governments WorkChoices legislation can be found at the following website hosted and coordinated by the Australian Council of Trade Unions: [http://www.actu.asn.au/work\\_rights/get\\_involved/JuneEvents.html](http://www.actu.asn.au/work_rights/get_involved/JuneEvents.html)

**JUNE 28: SEMINAR, "ETHICS, THE PRACTICAL REALITIES"** (NSW). The Edmund Rice Business Ethics Initiative is holding a breakfast seminar reflecting on ethics and the law. Guest speaker Howard Harrison, a partner in leading law firm Carroll & O'Dea, will consider ways to act ethically and humanely, to develop a sense of integrity and respect, and to link with people in business who take personal and corporate responsibilities seriously. 7.00am – 9.00am at the Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney . Cost \$45, members \$35, student groups negotiable (refer: <http://www.erc.org.au/busetics/forum.shtml>)

**JUNE 28: PUBLIC LECTURE, "POVERTY AND POST-COMMUNISM"** (NSW). Prof. Ivan Szelenyi of Yale University in USA will consider the issue of poverty in the context of research from six former socialist societies. 1.00 to 2.30pm, Room 25, Building G2, SPRC Western Grounds, University of New South Wales. To confirm the location, date, and time of a seminar, call (02) 9385 7803 or (02) 9385 7802. (refer: <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/seminars/2006s1.htm>)

**JUNE 28: PUBLIC LECTURE, "TACKLING COMPLEX ISSUES IN AN AGE OF 'SPIN', 'WEDGE POLITICS', 'FRAMING' AND THE 'NEW NORMAL'"** (Vic). The Hon. Dr Barry Jones, Vice Chancellor's Fellow, will speak at this Dean of Arts' public lecture. Free public lecture. 6.00 pm – 7.00pm, 2nd floor Lecture Theatre, 234 Queensberry Street, the University of Melbourne. For further info contact (03) 8344 3423 or [cappe-info@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:cappe-info@unimelb.edu.au) (refer: [http://events.unimelb.edu.au/eventid\\_2513.html](http://events.unimelb.edu.au/eventid_2513.html))

**JULY 3 – 7: NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY** (NSW). The Broken Bay Institute is convening this symposium at Mt St Benedict College, Pennant Hills, western Sydney. Keynote US speakers, Dr Charlotte McCorquodale and Drs Bob and Maggie McCarty, will address Builders and Dreamers: Creating Sustainable Ministry with Young People. Two academic courses will follow the two-day Symposium. For information contact BBI on (02) 9473 4570 or visit: [www.bbi.catholic.edu.au](http://www.bbi.catholic.edu.au).

*(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

## **CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES WELCOMES FALLING UNEMPLOYMENT:**

Catholic Social Services congratulated the Government on the fall in the numbers of people on Newstart and Youth Allowance but says greater investment in skills and training is needed to sustain employment in the long term.

**CARITAS CONDEMNS PROSTITUTION AT WORLD CUP:** With World Cup fever just around the corner, the Caritas confederation raised concerns about prostitution during soccer's premier event, saying that most of the estimated 40,000 sex workers expected to arrive in Germany to service football fans will be doing so unwillingly.

**NUN SAYS UNEMPLOYMENT UNDERLIES TIMOR TROUBLE:** Sr Tess Ward OLSH, who been living in East Timor since 2002, told the ABC's 7:30 Report that the root cause of the current unrest in East Timor is really the shortage of work, especially for young people.

**BISHOP SAYS ABORIGINES LIVING IN "CAULDRON OF DEPRAVITY":** Aboriginal people are "living in a cauldron of depravity", according to a statement from Bishop Chris Saunders, Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council.

**BISHOP MANNING BRIEFS POLICE ON NEW WORKPLACE MORAL CONUNDRUM:** Parramatta's Bishop Kevin Manning warned the NSW Police Association that the Government's new workplace laws present a moral conundrum for police officers.

**ARCHBISHOP HICKEY FACES QUESTIONS ON STOLEN GENERATIONS:** The newly appointed chairman of the Bishops Commission for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders defended the role of church missions involved in the Stolen Generation and says recent suggestions that Aboriginal children in danger should again be taken from their communities must consider lessons from past mistakes.

**CHURCHES CALLED TO SPEAK OUT FOR INDIGENOUS VICTIMS:** The Archdiocese of Adelaide called on religious groups to do more to help Indigenous communities affected by violence and abuse.

**POPE URGES PROMOTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE:** There is an urgent need for "tenacious, lasting and shared efforts to promote social justice" and that "true social justice" must be promoted through "genuine solidarity", Pope Benedict said on Friday.

**VINNIES WELCOMES NSW PREMIER'S COMMITMENT TO MENTAL HEALTH:** State President of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW/ACT, John O'Neill, thanked Premier Morris Iemma for his commitment to mental health on the occasion of the launch of the Society's Winter Appeal.

**POPE PRAISES AUSSIE CONTRIBUTION TO PEACEMAKING:** In a speech to the Australian ambassador, Anne Maree Plunkett, Pope Benedict praised the country's contributions to peacemaking and to development and disaster relief around the world, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

**BISHOPS OPPOSE BOAT PEOPLE PROCESSING PLAN:** The Australian Bishops have written to Prime Minister John Howard urging him to drop proposed laws currently before parliament to process all asylum seeker claims offshore.

**INDONESIAN DEATH ROW CATHOLICS LOSE COURT APPEAL:** Three Catholics from Poso have had their second appeal against the death penalty rejected by Indonesia's Supreme Court and reportedly are now in isolation cells awaiting execution.

**NSW COMMISSION CALLS FOR \$20PW BASIC PAY RISE:** In its written submission to this year's NSW State Wage Case, the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations called for an increase of at least \$20 in the minimum wage.

**CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES WORRIED ABOUT CHILDCARE QUALITY:** Catholic Social Services expressed concern that changes to the Government's childcare benefit scheme will result in low income parents missing out on much-needed childcare places as providers seek profits in high-income areas.

**JESUIT "PASTORAL CYCLE" EXPERT VISITS AUSTRALIA:** Jesuit expert on the "pastoral cycle", Fr Peter Henriot, visited Australia for a series of talks on Catholic Social Teaching and the relevance of social justice in today's age of globalisation and terror.

**VINNIES SEES LONG-TERM FOCUS MISSING FROM FEDERAL BUDGET:** The St Vincent de Paul Society cautioned Australians against taking comfort from the short-term gains in last night's Budget, with its spokesperson John Falzon suggesting that the Budget failed to "identify and address the areas of market failure and structural disadvantage in Australia".

**CHRISTIAN LEADERS SEEK END TO POLITICAL SPIN:** Putting a spin on things, rather than speaking the truth, become the norm, according to a group of Australian Christian leaders who last week issued a statement on what it means to believe in and follow Jesus Christ in Australia today.

**CHAPLAIN URGES FIX FOR ALICE SPRINGS TOWN CAMPS:** The Catholic chaplain who has been visiting the troubled Alice Springs town camps for three years told the entourage of Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Mal Brough that they do not provide a suitable environment to raise children.

**CATHOLIC ACTIVIST CHALLENGES PEACE MOVEMENT:** A controversial Catholic anti-war activist due to stand trial in Ireland in July for damaging a US warplane challenged the peace movement to take a stronger stand against the war in Iraq.

**BRENNAN FORESHADOWS LOWER MINIMUM WAGE:** Jesuit lawyer Frank Brennan told a conference of diocesan bank managers that the Federal Government's new Fair Pay Commission is confined by its legal mandate and would reduce the minimum wage in future if necessary.

**ST JOSEPH THE WORKER CALL TO LISTEN TO THREATENED WORKERS:** Bishop Christopher Saunders, Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, issued a Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker.

**CSSA CALLS WELFARE PAYMENTS PLAN OFFENSIVE:** Catholic Social Services Australia said that Families and Community Services Minister Mal Brough's call for welfare payments to some parents to be controlled in order to provide for their children is offensive and shortsighted.

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/605>

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## **JUNE SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR**

### **JUNE 3 THE MABO CASE**

In 1992, the High Court ruled that native title to land is recognised by the common law of Australia and that under Australian law, Indigenous people have rights to land which existed before colonisation and still exist. This decision did away with the legal fiction that when Australia was "discovered" by Captain Cook in 1788 it was terra nullius, an empty or uncivilised land. The case centred on the Murray Islands in the eastern part of the Torres Strait Islands, with the Meriam people led by Eddie Koiki Mabo.

"Aborigines were dispossessed of their land parcel by parcel, to make way for expanding colonial settlement. Their dispossession underwrote the development of the nation." Chief Justice Gerard Brennan

### **NATIVE TITLE**

Following the High Court's Mabo decision which recognised the existence of native title rights, Land Councils and other Aboriginal organisations throughout Australia lobbied the Federal Government to legislate to protect any native title that had survived 200 years of colonisation. In December 1993, the Native Title Act passed through the Federal Parliament, establishing in law what the Mabo decision had said, and making native title claims possible.

### **THE WIK CASE**

The Mabo decision, and the subsequent Native Title Act, left unresolved the issue of native title on pastoral leases. The Wik case concerned land which is, or has been, subject to pastoral leases. Pastoral leases conferred exclusive rights of use of the land to graze animals, but not exclusive rights of ownership to the land. The Wik people of Cape York in Queensland claimed native title could coexist with current pastoral leases. In December 1996, the High Court held that native title rights could exist side-by-side with the rights of pastoralists on cattle and sheep stations, called coexistence.

## **THE NATIVE TITLE AMENDMENT BILL**

The Wik decision led to a reaction from pastoralists and conservative leaders, who demanded that native title be extinguished on pastoral leases. The Ten Point Plan was used as the basis for drafting the Native Title Amendment Bill. The plan not only effectively extinguished native title on pastoral leases, but also on a range of other land tenures, vacant Crown land (land owned by the government that no-one else is using or has an interest in) in towns and cities and over waterways and airspace.

## **JUNE 4 PENTECOST SUNDAY**

This Fire Blessing has been used as a prayer by the Aboriginal people in the Kimberley for thousands of years.

*May the fire be in your thoughts, making them good and just,  
May it protect you from all harm.  
May the fire be in your eyes,  
May it open your eyes to see what is good in life,  
May it protect you from speaking against another.  
May the fire be in your ears,  
We pray that you may hear with deep listening  
So that you may hear the flow of water  
and of all Creation and of the Dreaming.  
May you be protected from gossip  
And from those things that harm and break down your family.  
May the fire be in your arms and hands,  
So that you may be of service and build up love.  
May the fire protect you from all violence.  
May the fire be in your whole being, in your legs and feet,  
Enabling you to walk the earth with respect and care,  
So that you may journey in ways of goodness and trust  
And be protected from walking away from what is true.*

## **JUNE 10 MYALL CREEK MASSACRE**

In 1838 a vicious attack on Aboriginal people took place at Myall Creek, north of Sydney. Some settlers, outraged at an attack on their cattle, wanted revenge. A group of stockmen surrounded over 30 Aboriginal men, women and children and murdered most of them.

## **MYALL CREEK MASSACRE MEMORIAL**

This memorial of national significance was produced by bringing together the descendants and representatives of the victims and perpetrators of the massacre in an act of reconciliation. A memorial service is held at the site each year on the Saturday closest to the anniversary date of 10 June.

## **JUNE 30 CLOSURE OF ATSIIC REGIONAL COUNCILS**

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Council

ATSIIC commenced operations on March 5, 1990. On 16th March 2005, Federal Parliament passed the ATSIIC Amendment Bill, repealing provisions of the ATSIIC Act and abolishing ATSIIC. The legislation provided for ATSIIC Regional Councils to close on 30th June 2005.

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