



# 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)*

*If you cannot read the email version, go to: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/briefing>*

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## FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear Friends,

You will be aware from earlier briefings that Australian citizen, David Hicks has been detained without trial in Guantanamo Bay since 2001. He has allegedly been subjected to intense interrogation and abuse during that time.

Human rights organisations, law societies overseas and in Australia, the churches and religious organisations and many individuals have campaigned against the circumstances of detainees there. The International Red Cross earlier described the treatment of detainees at Guantanamo as being 'tantamount to torture'. Pressure is being brought to bear on the Australian Government to demand Mr Hicks's release or immediate trial before a proper court.

The U.S. Supreme Court this year decided against the U.S. Government's proposed system of military tribunals to try detainees. The grounds for this decision were principally that the President had exceeded his authority in setting up the tribunals and that the arrangements did not meet the standards set out in the Geneva Conventions.

This briefing provides an update of developments concerning the detention of David Hicks and other detainees as well as calls for the facility at Guantanamo Bay to be closed.

## **New Military Commissions**

The U.S. Congress has now approved a system of tribunals similar in some respects to the one disallowed by the Supreme Court, and this approval was signed into law by President Bush on 18 October.

It is likely that there will be further delays as the new system is set up, new charges are laid and, most likely, a series of appeals against the proposed system is launched again.

The Attorney-General, Mr Philip Ruddock, has been reported as being willing to consider requesting the return of David Hicks should the U.S. not proceed quickly with trial arrangements. In mid-August, Mr Ruddock was reported as saying that he'd try to have David returned to Australia if no charges were laid by November. (refer: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/chance-hicks-may-be-home-by-christmas/2006/08/14/1155407746388.html>; <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200608/s1714999.htm>).

It is difficult, however, to know how long it will take to put this tribunal system in place. And it is unclear whether the Australian government will find legal and other delays acceptable. In effect, the fact that there is no clear time by which the tribunals will be in operation means that Mr Hicks is facing further indefinite detention.

In addition, there are serious concerns about the standards of justice of the proposed tribunals. Such concerns include lax rules of evidence that would allow hearsay and information gained under coercion, as well as the exclusion of the accused during some proceedings.

## **More calls for justice for David Hicks**

There is growing support for the closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay and for the provision of basic justice for detainees.

In an article in *The Age* on 10 October Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, George Cardinal Pell, ACSJC Chairman Bishop Christopher Saunders and Anglican Archbishop Peter Jensen called for an end to his indefinite detention.

The Cardinal said, "I have long been disturbed by some aspects of David Hicks' situation. From all accounts we owe him no special favours at all, but he has a right to be brought to trial more quickly than has happened and now as quickly as possible."

Bishop Saunders said, "If he has a case to answer he should be tried without further delay by a competent and independent tribunal with all of the protections of the rule of law that Australian citizens would expect, compliant with the Geneva conventions."

Archbishop Jensen said of David Hicks's circumstances, "It is both unjust and undemocratic and also an abuse of human rights. It goes against the freedoms and rights for a fair trial that have been developed in jurisprudence over centuries. David Hicks has the rights to a fair trial and it should be immediate." (refer: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/plea-from-churches-for-hicks/2006/10/09/1160246071521.html>)

Other distinguished citizens and organisations have raised their concerns.

After attending an address by David Hicks's military lawyer, Major Michael Mori, in early

November, National's Senator Barnaby Joyce said that the due process of law was not being followed and that if the proper processes meant that Mr Hicks should be sent home "then Mr Hicks had to be sent home." Senator Joyce said, "Hicks has been in jail five years – two years in solitary confinement – it is not unreasonable to say this must come to a head and a decision must be made". (refer: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/nationals-senator-raises-concerns-with-pm-about-detention-of-hicks/2006/11/03/1162340049834.html>)

At their meeting in Western Australia on 10 November, the State and Territory Attorneys-General signed the 'Fremantle Declaration' and called on the Commonwealth Government to take action to ensure David Hicks is immediately brought to trial. The declaration demands all Australian governments uphold the right to a fair trial, the principle of *habeas corpus*, the prohibition on indefinite detention without trial, the prohibition of torture, access to rights under the Geneva Conventions, the separation of powers and the prohibition of the death penalty. (refer: <http://www.users.bigpond.com/burnside/FremantleDec.pdf>; <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200611/s1785856.htm>)

The Attorneys General followed this with a letter to Attorney-General on 27 November. The letter included photos from an unnamed source of David Hicks's cell which cast into doubt the Federal Government's claims about the acceptability of his treatment in detention. The Attorneys' letter states that "the use of a cell of this type to confine Mr Hicks for eight months is inhumane" (refer: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/orange-crush/2006/11/27/1164476136512.html>)

On 9 November, an independent legal opinion was issued by the Hon. Alistair Nicholson QC, Peter Vickery QC, Prof. Hilary Charlesworth, Prof. Andrew Byrnes, Gavan Griffith QC and Prof. Tim McCormack. The distinguished jurists and academics maintain that the proposal to conduct a trial of David Hicks before the Second Military Commission would not be consistent with the decision of the recent U.S. Supreme Court and that a Military Commission established under the Military Commissions Act of 2006 would contravene the standards for a fair trial under Australian law. (refer: [www.criminology.unimelb.edu.au/staff/alastair\\_nicholson/Hicks\\_opinion\\_exec\\_summary.pdf](http://www.criminology.unimelb.edu.au/staff/alastair_nicholson/Hicks_opinion_exec_summary.pdf); <http://www.theage.com.au/text/articles/2006/11/10/1162661899397.html>)

The new ecumenical organisation, the Centre for an Ethical Society, was launched by former Chief Justice, Sir Gerard Brennan, on 17 November. Sir Gerard spoke of David Hicks when he said that our laws and policies need to be invigorated with the Christian value of the Good Samaritan:

"The outcasts are, by definition, denied their dignity... And see how we have tolerated, for five years now, the barbarous treatment of the Australian David Hicks in Guantanamo Bay, still waiting to be charged, it seems, with an offence under a law yet to be specified and tried by a process which mocks the civilized sense of justice. Do not blame governments alone. This could not have happened if our society were infused with Christian values," Sir Gerard said. (refer: <http://www.cathnews.com/news/611/doc/cets-brennan.htm>)

Pax Christi Australia [NSW] has written urging the Prime Minister to increase efforts to secure a just and humane resolution to David Hicks's situation and expressing concern that he has been "deprived of the centuries-old right of habeas corpus review that is embedded in Australian Law and that he is subject to the unilateral power of executive detention by a foreign power." Pax Christi has called on the Australian Government to act immediately and decisively to end this indefinite detention of David Hicks.

The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Adelaide have organised a petition to the Senate calling for action to end the indefinite detention without trial of this

Australian citizen. Thank you to those around the nation lending support to this petition. While the closing date for the receipt of petitions was 30 November, the Editor of Online Catholics has suggested that people might also write letters conveying the substance of the petition to the Attorney General (refer: <http://www.onlinecatholics.com.au/issue132/commop.php>)

Amnesty International Australia also has a campaign. It is a letter writing/email campaign; urging people to write to Prime Minister Howard advising the Federal Government to act to ensure David Hicks has access to a fair trial or is released. (refer: [http://www.amnesty.org.au/Act\\_now/action\\_centre/hrs/email\\_the\\_pm](http://www.amnesty.org.au/Act_now/action_centre/hrs/email_the_pm))

## **Breaking News**

Concluding their November Plenary Meeting in Sydney, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has issued a statement calling on the Australian Government to act now and to act decisively.

The Bishops say that David Hicks has been held with “no ability to contest the accusations against him. There is now heightened concern for his physical and mental health, in conditions which reputable human rights agencies have said are tantamount to torture.”

“A continuation of the current situation is not acceptable.

“Australia has a duty as a member of the world community to uphold standards of justice and decency. Historically, Australia and its allies have a proud record in supporting these principles, both within and outside their borders,” the Bishops say.

The statement calls on both the Australian and U.S. Governments to resolve this issue urgently. (refer: <http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/latest.html>)

## **Christmas wishes**

Members of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council and staff of the secretariat would like to thank our readers and subscribers for their support throughout 2006. Thank you to ACSJC Diocesan Contacts, sister organisations and all people working in the field of social justice. Wishing you and your loved ones a happy and holy Christmas. As we welcome the Prince of Peace, may this be a time of joy and renewal for the year ahead.

*John Ferguson*  
*National Executive Officer*

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# CURRENT ISSUES/RESOURCES

## COMPENDIUM OF SOCIAL DOCTRINE

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church is a most helpful resource. If you do not yet have a hard copy of the Compendium you can access it electronically by visiting the following webpage:

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/justpeace/documents/rc\\_pc\\_justpeace\\_doc\\_20060526\\_compendio-dott-soc\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html)

## VATICAN WEBPAGE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE.

The Holy See has established a Website dedicated to information about, and formation in, justice and peace. The initiative was launched recently by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, whose president is Cardinal Renato Martino. For now, the Web page will publish information in Spanish, Italian, English and French on ecclesial documents, congresses, statements of representatives of the Church. The Web page also gives information about the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, as well as its members. Visit: <http://www.justpax.it>

## ANTaR VICTORIA: “GET REAL: TOWARDS REAL RECONCILIATION”

Acting on the request of peak Indigenous bodies in Victoria, ANTaR Vic is supporting calls for justice and real reconciliation for Indigenous Australians in this state. The Victorian Traditional Owners Land Justice Group (VTOLJG) and Victoria's State-wide and Peak Indigenous NGO's have recently released documents outlining their key concerns and how they can be addressed. ANTaR is in turn calling for support and action to initiate change based on principles which respect and recognise Indigenous self-determination, human rights and culture. To read more about the campaign visit: <http://www.antarvictoria.org.au/Aframeworkforrealreconciliation.htm>

## UNIYA PUBLICATION: “JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION IN EAST TIMOR”

Coinciding with the lunches of the final report of East Timor's Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CAVR) around Australia, Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre has published a the booklet, *Justice and Reconciliation in East Timor – Australia and the CAVR*. It has been produced to give Australians a better understanding of the final report of the CAVR, especially as it relates to Australia. For further information contact Uniya on (02) 9356 3888 or [reception@uniya.org](mailto:reception@uniya.org) (Refer: <http://www.uniya.org.au>)

## **EDMUND RICE CENTRE: “DEPORTED TO DANGER II”**

The Edmund Rice Centre in collaboration with the School of Education at the Australian Catholic University has been investigating the fate of asylum seekers deported from Australia. This includes the original report ‘Deported to Danger’ and the subsequent report ‘Deported to Danger II’, which details the cases of 41 asylum seekers who have been interviewed as part of the project. The report reveals that a significant number of those deported to Afghanistan had since been killed or had members of their families killed. (refer:

[http://www.erc.org.au/index.php?module=documents&JAS\\_DocumentManager\\_op=viewDocument&JAS\\_Document\\_id=1](http://www.erc.org.au/index.php?module=documents&JAS_DocumentManager_op=viewDocument&JAS_Document_id=1))

## **CENTRE FOR AN ETHICAL SOCIETY LAUNCHED**

The Centre for an Ethical Society was launched by Sir Gerard Brennan, former Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, in Sydney on 21 November. The Centre’s purpose is the pursuit of the common good by the promotion of Christian social values in Australian society. You can read Sir Gerard’s launch address along with papers on the Christian commitment to social justice written by Fr Michael Fallon, Adjunct Professor Michael Costigan and Dr Ray Cleary on the Centre’s website at <http://www.ces.org.au>

## **SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH RESOURCE: ‘THE HOUR HAS COME’**

A community awareness package, “The Hour Has Come: Working towards a justly reconciled Australia”, has been produced. It consists of five reflection and discussion sessions drawn from the words spoken by Pope John Paul II in 1986. The project is informed by the experience of Josephites and their partners in ministry who are working with Indigenous people across Australia. Attractively presented in full colour, the resource encourages participants to reflect on the words of the Pope, to consider the state of affairs in Australia at present and to build a local plan of action to address the issues. Cost per package: \$8.00. For further information email [enquiries@sosj.org.au](mailto:enquiries@sosj.org.au) or write to: Josephite Leaders’ Social Action Office, P.O. Box 326, CURTIN, ACT 2605. (refer: <http://www.sosj.org.au/justice/index.html>)

## **CROSS CULTURAL SUMMER SCHOOL**

The Fourth Annual Cross Cultural Summer School is a joint endeavour of the Sisters of St Joseph and the Columban Fathers. They have been evaluated by participants as an intensive experience of preparation for cultural crossing, proving valuable for those crossing to a new culture for ministry, as well as those returning to their own culture after such an experience. The Summer School occurs from 5 January to 26 January 2006. Applications close on 1 December 2006. The course cost is \$2,700 which includes all accommodation, food, course materials and presenters fees. Those interested should phone (02) 8912 4869 or (02) 8912 4868 or email [sandy.leaitua@sosj.org.au](mailto:sandy.leaitua@sosj.org.au) All applications for scholarships are to be sent to: The Scholarship Administrator, Cross Cultural Summer School, PO Box 1508, North Sydney, NSW 2059.



## **CHRISTMAS WITH PALMS AUSTRALIA**

At the start of this year, Palms Australia had a target of \$225,619 to raise as part of our community initiative to support 12 two-year volunteer placements for work overseas beginning in 2006. So far they have raised \$96,756.90 towards these costs. Palms is preparing to send another group of volunteers next year and is seeking your support to get as close to the current target as possible before the New Year. If you usually celebrate Christmas or buy presents or send Christmas cards or even drink coffee and eat food, you can continue to do this while helping Palms provide volunteers to global communities. Visit <http://www.palms.org.au> (or call (02) 9642 0558) to find out more about how you can help.

## **CHRISTMAS CARDS**

The Great Lakes branch of Rural Australians for Refugees is inviting you to place your orders for 2006 Christmas cards. Because of the wonderful response to cards last year they distributed over 9,000 cards and were able to donate more than \$6,000 to asylum seekers, refugee support groups and legal advocates. This year they have only 8,000 cards and would be very happy if you would choose to order some. The order form describes the card, shows a thumbnail photo of the card, and gives you the details for ordering. (refer:

<http://www.rightsaustralia.org.au/data/OrderForm.doc>)

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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>)

### **SERIES PAPER: CHOICE FOR WHOM? A DISCUSSION OF THE 2005 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LAWS**

Catholic Social Justice Series paper No.58. At a time when Australia's industrial relations laws are undergoing radical change, Dr Tim Battin offers an analysis of the theory underpinning the 2005 industrial relations legislation, and measures that rationale against the precepts of Catholic social teaching. Given the rapid pace of the industrial relations changes, and the fact that they have been put in place so recently, it may be some time before their full impact is understood. Dr Battin considers some likely practical effects of the legislation as well as some moral implications. This paper takes its place beside recent publications by the ACSJC such as *From Money to Meaning: Young People and Work* (by the YCW) and the 2006 Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker.

(\$6.60 a copy, plus postage – postage rates listed below)

## **ORDER NOW! - 2007 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY**

The 2007 Diary focuses on the theme of globalisation. It includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days which celebrate particular aspects of social justice and highlight the theme. It provides a social justice program for the full year. Information and ideas for prayer and reflection are included.

This is an essential resource for teachers and parishes. Cost: \$6.60 (inc. GST), plus postage. To download an order form, go to:

[http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social\\_justice\\_calendar.html](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social_justice_calendar.html)

## **2006 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT – STILL TAKING ORDERS**

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Sunday Statement is entitled "The Heart of Our Country – dignity and justice for our Indigenous sisters and brothers". An order form for the Statement is available on the ACSJC website:

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au> The Statement can be downloaded at:

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au> and

<http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/latest.html>

For associated resources visit the ACSJC website or call (02) 9956 5811

## **SERIES PAPER: CATHOLICS AND NATURE: TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES IN AUSTRALIA**

Catholic Social Justice Series No.57. Concern for the environment has played a significant role in the Catholic Church in Australia since the 19th century. Fr Charles Rue SSC traces the development of environmental thought in Australian Catholicism.

(\$6.60 a copy, plus postage – postage rates listed below)

## **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.

(\$6.60 a copy, plus postage – postage rates listed below)

(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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## DECEMBER-JANUARY NOTICES

**30 NOVEMBER – 3 DECEMBER. THE PEOPLE'S INQUIRY INTO DETENTION (SA).** The People's Inquiry into Detention will be launched in Adelaide on Thursday evening, with hearings to follow on Friday 1 December to Sunday 3 December. Both the launch and the hearings will be held in the rooms of the Law Society, Level 2, Primus Telecom Building, 132 Franklin St., Adelaide. For more information on the Inquiry visit: <http://www.SAVE.org.au/peoplesinquiry> or email [tbirss@adam.com.au](mailto:tbirss@adam.com.au)

**1 DECEMBER. CONFERENCE: 'HUMAN RIGHTS 2006' (VIC).** The Castan Centre is holding the Human Rights, Year in Review conference, highlighting many of the year's most pressing issues. 9.15 am to 4.30 pm at the CUB Malthouse, 113 Sturt Street, Southbank, Melbourne. For conference program and registration details visit <http://www.law.monash.edu.au/castancentre/events/conferences.html>

**2 DECEMBER. CATHOLIC CHURCH TV AUSTRALIA SCREENS "MARTYRS OF EAST TIMOR" (National).** This week we remember the day in 1975 when East Timor declared their independence, which led to terrible repression. In this film we remember some recent martyrs who gave their life in East Timor in solidarity with their persecuted people, by defending the rights of the poor, or for simply trying to bring healing and peace to others. Screens at: 2.00pm on 2 Dec. on Catholic Church TV, Aurora Channel, Foxtel Digital.

**2 DECEMBER. EVENT: "DEFEND DEMOCRACY DINNER" (NSW).** Eureka Sydney is having a Defend Democracy Dinner on the eve of the 152nd anniversary of the Eureka Rebellion. Speakers are Susan Ryan, AO (former Minister for Education and Women's Affairs in the Hawke Government), Dr John Buchanan (Director of the Workplace Research Centre at Sydney University) and the MC is Siobhan McHugh (writer/broadcaster on Eureka and the Snowy Scheme). 6.30 for 7.00pm, Show Biz Room, South Sydney Leagues Club, 265 Chalmers St Redfern, Sydney. Cost: \$25. Bookings essential (refer: [http://www.erc.org.au/index.php?module=calendar&calendar\[view\]=event&id=62](http://www.erc.org.au/index.php?module=calendar&calendar[view]=event&id=62))

**2 DECEMBER. EVENT: "HOMEBAKE IN THE DOMAIN" (NSW).** Having played host to a plethora of national and internationally famous local superstars, HOMEBAKE has matured to become one of Australia's most important and respected festival events. Each and every year The HOMEBAKE Festival embraces a charity and this year they will be highlighting the work of Youth Off The Streets. For further information see [www.homebake.com.au](http://www.homebake.com.au) The proceeds of this year's HOMEBAKE artists signing tent will go to Youth Off The Streets. (refer: <http://www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/events/index.html>)

**3 DECEMBER. FORUM: "CARING ABOUT ABORIGINES" (NSW).** At this ACMICA Event, hosted at St Joseph's Newtown, Michael Gravener, Coordinator of Redfern Settlement, will speak to the topic "Caring about Redfern Aborigines: What is life like for Redfern Aborigines and who are

they?”. 10.00am Mass to 11.15 discussion. Pink Room 111 Lennox St., Newtown, Sydney (far left gate of three storey building ground floor). Free event – All welcome. For further info contact (02) 9797 8128 or [newtown@catholic.org](mailto:newtown@catholic.org)

**3 DECEMBER. “THE LONG WALK” (VIC).** In 2004 AFL legend and Aboriginal activist Michael Long, fed up with the plight of his people, set out to walk from his home in Melbourne to see Prime Minister John Howard in Canberra. He was joined by many Indigenous and non-Indigenous supporters. On Sunday, 3 December you are invited to join thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians for The Long Walk 2006 for approximately 5km to raise money for the Sir Douglas Nicholls Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership. After The Long Walk there will be a celebration of live music and entertainment. 9.00am to 1.00pm, Albert Park: Junction Oval. Walk begins at 10.30am. (refer: [http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/calendar/event\\_display\\_detail.php?event\\_id=3803&day=3&month=12&year=2006](http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/calendar/event_display_detail.php?event_id=3803&day=3&month=12&year=2006))

**4 DECEMBER. LECTURE: DR. ANDREW MCNAUGHTAN MEMORIAL LECTURE (NSW).** The Third Annual Australia-East Timor Association Lecture will be given by Dr. Chris Fenton who is co-ordinating a team of Australian medical surgeons and other professionals in the building of a permanent operating theatre for specialist medical care inside Timor Leste (Hospital of Hope). Dr Fenton will speak on "The Role of Health Care in Building a Lasting Peace in Timor Leste". 6.00 to 8.00 pm, Lecture Theatre - Old Geology Building, Sydney University. Enter building from walkway opposite Old Footbridge Theatre, Parramatta Rd end at left from top of stairs. The Lecture will be preceded by the launch of two recent publications on East Timor. The launches will be chaired by Julia Leigh. Sister Susan Connelly will launch "Exile and Return - Among the East Timorese Diaspora" (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006) by Amanda Wise. Laura Abrantes, Mana Cassian and Jude Conway will launch "Independent Women - The story of women's activism in East Timor" (CIIR, London U.K. 2005) by Irena Cristalis and Catherine Scott. RSVP to [jefferson.lee@bigpond.com](mailto:jefferson.lee@bigpond.com) or (02)9569-6070 or (02) 9331-5986. Entry by donation.

**5 DECEMBER. FORUM: “TOWARDS A LOW CARBON SOCIETY” (QLD).** A Friends of the Earth Forum on viable alternatives in energy use, lifestyle and transport. 6.00 to 8.00 p.m., AHIMSA House, 26 Horan St, West End. For mor information call 3846 5793.

**5 DECEMBER. SCREENING: “MOUNTAIN OF LIGHT - THE CUBAN DOCTORS PROGRAM” (NSW).** AID/Watch is screening the Cuban video (with English subtitles) 'Montanya de Luz' (Mountain of Light) - about the Cuban doctors in Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras and various parts of Africa. The Cuban Consul-General, Ms. Nérida Hernández Carmona will give an introduction and Dr Tim Anderson will explain the development of Cuban health cooperation in Timor-Leste and the Pacific. 6.00 pm at the Tom Mann Theatre, 136 Chalmers St Surrey Hills, Sydney. Entry by Donation. Contact 0401 758 871 or [aidwatch@aidwatch.org.au](mailto:aidwatch@aidwatch.org.au) (refer: <http://www.aidwatch.org.au/assets/aw00993/cuban%20doctors%20video.pdf>)

**6 DECEMBER. SEMINAR: “BEST CHOICE DISCRIMINATION FREE WORKPLACE” (NSW).** Stepan Kerkyasharian AM, President of the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW cordially invites you to attend a free information session on unlawful discrimination in NSW employment and how this relates to *WorkChoices*. 10.00 to 11.00am, NSW Parliament House Theatre, Macquarie Street, Sydney. RSVP on (02) 92685555 or [adbcontact@agd.nsw.gov.au](mailto:adbcontact@agd.nsw.gov.au)

**6 DECEMBER. SEMINAR: “WHEN SOLUTIONS BECOME THE PROBLEM” (ACT).** As part of the ANU’s Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research seminar series, Mark Moran, Manager of Research at the Centre for Appropriate Technology in Alice Springs, will discuss the conditions of practice for administrative innovation in discrete Indigenous settlements. 12.30 to 2.00pm, CAEPR Seminar Room GO58, Ground Floor, Hanna Neumann Bldg 21, The Australian National University, Canberra. For further info contact (02)6125 0587 or [admin.caepr@anu.edu.au](mailto:admin.caepr@anu.edu.au) (refer: <http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/events.php>)

**7 DECEMBER. EVENT: “2006 HUMAN RIGHTS MEDAL AND AWARDS CEREMONY” (NSW).** HREOC is holding a celebratory luncheon where the Human Rights Medal and Awards will be presented. The Human Rights Medal recognises the achievements of an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to human rights in Australia. Awards are also presented for contributions in the areas of Law, the Community, Print Media, Television, Radio or Arts Non-Fiction. The Awards will be presented at ceremony in the Grand Ballroom at the Sheraton on the Park hotel in Sydney on Thursday from midday to 3pm. The cost for the 2 course Luncheon, plus drinks, is: \$55 for a Standard Ticket; \$30 for Groups/Students/Unemployed/Senior Citizens; \$500 for tables of 10. For more info contact (02) 9284 9618 or [hrawards@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:hrawards@humanrights.gov.au). (refer: [http://www.humanrights.gov.au/hr\\_awards/](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards/))

**7 DECEMBER. CONFERENCE, “PACIFIC ISLANDS-AUSTRALIA UPDATE” (ACT).** Presented by the Crawford School of Economics and Government, The Australian National University, this conference will address a range of issues including: migration to Australia; climate change; fuel prices, aid and development; political economy; stability issues; and Australia’s recent engagement with the Pacific islands. Contributions from experts in the field. 9.30am to 4.45pm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. For more information and to download papers, please visit <http://peb.anu.edu.au>

**7–8 DECEMBER. CONFERENCE: “THE CONSTRAINTS TO FULL EMPLOYMENT” (NSW).** The Centre of Full Employment and Equity (CofFEE) is hosting the conference on Full Employment or WorkChoices and Welfare-to-Work. It will incorporate the 8th Path to Full Employment Conference and the 13th National Conference on Unemployment. It will be staged at the University of Newcastle. Major themes for the Conference as well and programme and registration details are available on the CofFEE website: <http://e1.newcastle.edu.au/coffee/conferences/2006/index.cfm>

**7–18 DECEMBER. EXHIBITION: “DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: FORGOTTEN WAR” (TAS).** This photographic exhibition depicts the death, starvation, impact of conflict and disease of people in Congo. It also shows the hope through depictions of people’s resilience and help of humanitarian assistance. It will be shown at the IXL Atrium, Henry Jones Art Hotel (25 Hunter Street), every day from 8.00am to 6.00pm. This exhibition is presented by Médecins Sans Frontières and is sponsored by the Nursing Agency of Australia (NAA), with Brisbane Powerhouse as Artistic Partner and the Air Road Foundation as Transport Partner. (refer: <http://www.tasmedia.org/node/1326>)

**9 DECEMBER. EVENT: HUMAN RIGHTS DINNER (QLD).** To mark International Human Rights Day Just Rights Queensland is holding a human rights dinner. Speakers including Senators Clare Moore and Andrew Bartlett, Sam Watson, Noel Preston, Margaret Wenham and Jeff Brunne will reflect on 2006 - a year in Human Rights. Tickets are \$45 which includes a two course vegetarian meal. 6.00pm for 6.30pm start at the Holiday Inn, Roma St, Brisbane. Cost: \$45. RSVP to [campaign@justrightsqld.org](mailto:campaign@justrightsqld.org) or 0410 551 354.

**9 DECEMBER. RALLY: “FIVE YEARS TOO LONG - BRING DAVID HOME NOW” (NSW).** On this day marking the fifth year of imprisonment for David Hicks with no chance of his release in sight, human rights and civil liberties groups and organisations have come together to organise a National Day of Action calling for the repatriation of David Hicks and the closure of Guantanamo. Hear a range of speakers including Senator Kerry Nettle, Andrew Ferguson, Brett Collins. 12 noon, at Sydney Town Hall. For more information & to add your endorsement & support contact 0401 758 871 or 0401 900 690 or access [www.fairgofordavid.org](http://www.fairgofordavid.org); [www.stopwarcoalition.org](http://www.stopwarcoalition.org); [www.amnesty.org.au](http://www.amnesty.org.au)

**9 DECEMBER. RALLY FOR DAVID HICKS (VIC).** Organised by Amnesty International, Liberty Victoria and Civil Rights Defence, speakers will include: Major Michael Mori; Lex Lasry, QC; Nicola Roxon, Shadow Attorney General; Rob Stary, civil libertarian and lawyer. 2.00 to 4.00pm, Federation Square, Melbourne. For more info contact 0407 856 628 or [colinmitchell9@yahoo.com.au](mailto:colinmitchell9@yahoo.com.au). (Refer: [http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/calendar/event\\_display\\_detail.php?event\\_id=3811&day=9&month=12&year=2006](http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/calendar/event_display_detail.php?event_id=3811&day=9&month=12&year=2006))

**10 DECEMBER. LECTURE: “ACCESS TO JUSTICE - A HUMAN RIGHT IN PRINCIPLE, POLICY AND PRACTICE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA” (WA).** Lecture by the Hon Wayne Martin, Chief Justice of Western Australia. Event hosted by the United Nations Association of Australia WA. 1:30pm, Alexander Library Lecture Theatre. For further details and to RSVP contact (08) 9221 9455 or [unaawa@tpg.com.au](mailto:unaawa@tpg.com.au) (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/perth/calendar/?display=zoom&event=569>)

**11–16 DECEMBER. CATHOLIC CHURCH TV AUSTRALIA SCREENS “GOD IN TIBET” (National).** This week in Australia we mark Human Rights Week. One important factor within human rights is religious freedom, and one country that has received a lot of attention in regard to human rights is Tibet. This film looks at the Southwest corner of Tibet, known as the ‘roof-of-the-world’. Geographically isolated, a unique culture and tradition of Catholicism has survived, exceptional to Buddhist Tibet and the present communist rule.

Film screens at: 8.00am on 11 Dec.; 7.30pm on 14 Dec.; 1.30am and 1.30pm on 15 Dec.; 1.30pm on 16 Dec. Catholic Church TV, Aurora Channel, Foxtel Digital.

**11 DECEMBER. FORUM: “THE ONE COURT THAT CONGRESS CANNOT TAKE AWAY: SINGULARITY, SUPREMACY, AND ARTICLE III” (ACT).** Prof. Laurence Claus of the School of Law, University of San Diego, will talk about the constitutional case against the jurisdiction-stripping provisions of the Military Commissions Act of 2006, including a new analysis of what the United States Constitution’s suspension clause tells us about the proper interpretation

of Congress's power to make "Exceptions" to the Supreme Court's appellate jurisdiction. This event of the ANU's Centre for International and Public Law will be held from 12 noon at the Staff Library Level 1, ANU College of Law, (Bldg 5), cnr Fellows & East Roads, The ANU. RSVP to [cipl@law.anu.edu.au](mailto:cipl@law.anu.edu.au) (refer: <http://law.anu.edu.au/cipl/events.asp>)

**13 DECEMBER. ADDRESS: "PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN A CLIMATE OF FEAR" (VIC).** The Human Rights Day 6th Annual Human Rights Oration will be delivered by Julian Burnside QC. 12 noon to 1.00pm, ZINC at Federation Square. RSVP by 7 December to the Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria, on (03) 9281 7138 or [ellen.orm@eoc.vic.gov.au](mailto:ellen.orm@eoc.vic.gov.au) (refer: <http://www.law.monash.edu.au/castancentre/events/>)

**13 DECEMBER. FORUM: "CLIMATE CHANGE – HOW DO WE ADAPT?" (QLD).** The Australian School of Environmental Studies and the Griffith University Eco Centre will hold a community forum to explore the debate on climate change adaptation. Guest Speakers include Professor Roger Kitching, climate change environmental scientist, Dr Andrew Zuch, Department of Natural Resources and Mines, and Jill Lang, Queensland Council of Social Services. Griffith University Eco Centre, Nathan Campus from 6.00 to 8.00pm with a free sausage sizzle from 5.00 pm RSVP to the Griffith University Eco Centre on 3735 7992 or e-mail [ecocentre@griffith.edu.au](mailto:ecocentre@griffith.edu.au)

**13 DECEMBER. LECTURE. "40 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW" (NSW).** A free public lecture hosted by the Don Chipp Foundation to mark the 40th anniversary of the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Keynote speaker is John Pace, who served as Secretary to the UN Commission on Human Rights for sixteen years. Event will be hosted by Phil Glendenning from the Edmund Rice Centre and James Dunn, former ambassador to East Timor. 6.00pm, McDonald Room of the State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney. All welcome. For further info contact the Don Chipp Foundation at [coordinator@donchippfoundation.org.au](mailto:coordinator@donchippfoundation.org.au) (refer: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/events/>)

**14 DECEMBER. EVENT: ACMICA CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISER DINNER (NSW).** You are invited to share an evening with your "Australian Catholic Movement for Intellectual & Cultural Affairs" friends over a fabulous Indian/Pakistani banquet at the Tandoori Hut. Food will include all your Indian favourites with dishes ranging from extra mild to deliciously spicy. 6.30 for 7.00pm, Tandoori Hut, 93 Enmore Rd. Enmore (opposite Enmore Theatre). Bring Your Own – wine and beer. Bottle shop is handy. Soft drinks available at Restaurant  
Cost: \$25 (this price includes fundraiser). RSVP by 10 December to (02) 9557 3197 or [pmaher@acmica.org](mailto:pmaher@acmica.org)

**18 DECEMBER. FORUM: "DIALOGUE AMONG FAITHS AND CIVILISATIONS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC" (QLD).** The Griffith University Multi-Faith Centre will host a lunch forum to explore how dialogue between faiths is promoting peace and harmony in the Asia-Pacific. Panellists include Archbishop Fernando Capalla of Davao, the Philippines; Professor Azyumardi Azra, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia; Ven Wu Shin, Pure Land Centre, Dr Rachael Cohn, ABC Radio broadcaster; Glenine Hamlyn, Qld Churches Together; and Professor Toh Swee-Hin. Griffith University Multi-Faith Centre from noon to 2.00 p.m. RSVP on 3735 7052 or e-mail [mfc@griffith.edu.au](mailto:mfc@griffith.edu.au)



**25–30 DECEMBER. CATHOLIC CHURCH TV AUSTRALIA SCREENS “TSUNAMI – ONE YEAR ON” (National).** This week we mark the second anniversary of the Tsunami which hit so many of our northern neighbours. In this film we look at how our support of the Catholic Aid agency, Caritas, reached out immediately to help our friends in the affected countries. Film screens at: 8.00am on 25 Dec.; 7.30pm on 28 Dec.; 1.30am and 1.30pm on 29 Dec.; 2.00pm on 30 Dec. Catholic Church TV, Aurora Channel, Foxtel Digital.

**DECEMBER AND JANUARY: EDMUND RICE CENTRE FREMANTLE PRESENTS IMMERSION PROGRAMS IN INDIA AND TIMOR LESTE (WA).** A model of active citizenship that allows participants to learn through ‘experiential learning’ what it means to be part of a global humanity. Information: Tel. (07) 9335 4353. Email: [erc@powerdsl.com.au](mailto:erc@powerdsl.com.au) Web [www.ercfremantle.org](http://www.ercfremantle.org)

**17–19; 22–23 JANUARY. SUMER SCHOOL: “CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD” (NSW).** Dr John Luttrell fms presents this course, which takes participants from the European Catholic Church following the Council of Trent and follows the interesting development towards Vatican II. From this historical perspective, insight is gained into the theology and spirituality of the modern Catholic Church. 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, Catholic Institute of Sydney, 99 Albert Rd, Strathfield, Sydney. For further information contact (02) 9752 9500 or [cisinfo@cis.catholic.edu.au](mailto:cisinfo@cis.catholic.edu.au) (refer: <http://www.cis.catholic.edu.au/SummerSchools.htm>)

(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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## **NOVEMBER NEWS MONITOR**

### **Catholic school teachers to join IR protests**

Following criticism by the Prime Minister of government school teachers who planned to join national protests against workplace laws, unions for teachers in Catholic and independent schools have confirmed that thousands of private school staff are also expected to participate.

### **Sri Lanka in state of civil war: Caritas chief**

Sri Lanka is in a state of civil war and facing a major humanitarian crisis, the head of Caritas Australia said, in the latest call for a ceasefire and the establishment of an international emergency committee to look for solutions to the violence.

### **Churches challenge rich countries on greenhouses gases**

Rich countries must reduce their greenhouse gases drastically, a World Council of Churches representative told the UN Climate Conference on Friday but churches in the developing world are not waiting to launch action in their own regions.

### **Housing debt, consumerism taking toll: Archbishop Hickey**

The real estate boom may be making Perth an investor's paradise but Archbishop Barry Hickey said that the associated problems of bankruptcies and mortgage sales are causing marriage failures and even suicide.

### **Catholic priest and nun human shields against Israeli bombing**

American Catholic priest and nun spent several hours at the home of a Palestinian militant acting as human shields to protect the house from destruction by Israeli military forces.

### **Pastoral care under threat at Christmas Island, said Bishop Grech**

The isolated location of a new detention centre being constructed at the cliff-surrounded western tip of Christmas Island will make it "virtually impossible" to provide adequate pastoral care, said Bishop Grech.

### **Govt incentives encourage job agency rorting, report said**

The Government's system of rewarding job agencies that delay help to the unemployed until they are out of work for more than 12 months exacerbates long-term unemployment and provides incentives for the agencies to "stretch the ethical boundaries", a Catholic Social Services report said.

### **Church must fight for common good, former Chief Justice said**

Speaking at the launch of an ecumenical social justice centre, former Chief Justice Sir Gerard Brennan said that churches need to win "hearts and minds" to the idea of a common good based on the dictum that "the money you keep locked away is the money of the poor".

### **Wadeye Indigenous community appeals to Pell**

A Northern Territory Indigenous leader, Tobias Ngambe from the Wadeye Indigenous community west of Darwin met with Sydney Cardinal George Pell to seek additional funding for a disadvantaged local school.

### **SA drops planned ban on religious discrimination law**

The South Australian government dropped a planned ban on religious discrimination following opposition to the proposed law from the main Christian denominations over fears that they would be prevented from converting non-Christians.

### **Christian groups in G20 solidarity protest**

Christian anti-poverty campaigners planned to set up a tent outside the G20 Summit as finance ministers and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union arrive in Melbourne

### **Rabbi outraged by Brennan "ghetto" comments**

Jesuit Fr Frank Brennan apologised for hurt caused by remarks describing conditions in Bethlehem as "ghetto-like" after a Melbourne rabbi said he "felt sickened" by what he characterised as the human rights activist's "politically charged speech".

### **Refugee fears mount over Indonesia treaty and high court decision**

The Brisbane Catholic Justice and Peace Commission voiced concern about the implications for West Papuans of a pact between Australia and Indonesia while Edmund Rice Centre said that a recent High Court decision will put refugee lives in danger.

### **Human trafficking worse than slave trade, Cardinal claims**

International human trafficking has intensified to the point that it is now worse than the historical



slave trade from Africa, the head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Cardinal Renato Martino, said.

### **Church's best kept secret revealed**

A new website promising to provide in plain English "almost everything" the faithful wanted know about the Church's social teaching was launched by Jesuit provincial, Fr Mark Raper.

### **Indonesian prosecutors allege man planned hundreds of Christian decapitations**

An Indonesian man now on trial for his life for the beheading murder of three Christian girls had planned hundreds more killings, prosecutors told a court in Poso, Sulawesi.

### **Ban political donations, said Edmund Rice Centre**

The Edmund Rice Centre director Phil Glendenning weighed in on the debate over a ban on political donations, saying that a \$10,000 jaunt with a political leader could fund half the cost of an apprenticeship for a young Australian.

### **Bathersby calls Christians to ecological conversion**

As thousands marched in capital cities across Australia to call for measures to combat global warming, Brisbane Archbishop John Bathersby told a rally that he believes that it is not possible to be Christian and not care about the environment.

### **Media violence desensitises young people, said youth advocate**

Influential bands that advocate rape are impacting on young minds, said youth advocate, Fr Chris Riley, as it is revealed that one youth in the notorious Werribee DVD is a student at a Geelong Catholic college.

### **Slammer not the answer, say NZ bishops**

With New Zealand incarceration rates second only to those of the US, what is needed is a new approach, not new prisons for the country's growing prison population, New Zealand's bishops said.

### **God "not wholly owned" by any political party: Rudd**

Speaking at the launch of Jesuit Fr Frank Brennan's latest book on religion and politics, Labor frontbencher Kevin Rudd accused Coalition MPs of failing to address the "destructive impact that market fundamentalism on the family, the community."

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/611>

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# DECEMBER SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

## December 10 Human Rights Day

### 10 Point Plan for Human Rights

- **Accept personal responsibility for change**, no matter how small. Don't assume that someone else will do it. Don't be complacent. Even small things like refusing to laugh at a racist joke can make a difference.
- **Reflect on your own behaviour.** Reflect on the cultural practices or beliefs that you find confronting or difficult. It is healthier to name and discuss the issues that you find difficult than to try and be saintly.
- **Identify what you have got to give.** It may be time. It may be specific expertise. It may be a shoulder to cry on or a sympathetic ear. It may be money. Everyone can do something and this may change at different times in your life.
- **Act in your own context.** For example, has anybody in your workplace raised the desirability of a workplace code of values and ethics? If not, perhaps you could do it. Once people have discussed desirable ways in which people should treat each other in the workplace, it is a short step to raising human rights more broadly.
- **Collaborate.** There is strength in partnerships and strategic alliances.
- **Join. Network. Lobby. Advocate.** Tell politicians what you think. To recycle an old slogan: 'Keep the bastards honest.' Sign petitions. Write letters. If you can, make use of the Internet and email to reach people.
- **Treat everyone with respect.** Respect is more important than compassion or sympathy, because respect is based on familiarity and understanding. And respect ensures that people retain dignity.
- **Be inclusive.** Once you have a good relationship with people, it becomes easier to think about how social justice and human rights issues can be raised.
- **Maintain your rage.** Also maintain your hope, your optimism and your sense of humour.
- **And finally, celebrate your successes.** Not only does this make you feel good but it also energises you for more work.

— Lowitja O'Donoghue, [www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/resources/publications](http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/resources/publications)

### December 10 Prime Minister Paul Keating's Speech

Australian Launch of the International Year  
for the World's Indigenous People  
Redfern Park, Sydney, 10 December 1992

... In truth, we cannot confidently say that we have succeeded as we would like to have succeeded if we have not managed to extend opportunity and care, dignity and hope to the indigenous people of Australia - the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

This is a fundamental test of our social goals and our national will: our ability to say to ourselves and the rest of the world that Australia is a first rate social democracy, that we are what we should be - truly the land of the fair go and the better chance.

There is no more basic test of how seriously we mean these things...

More, I think than most Australians recognise, the plight of Aboriginal Australians affects us all...

This is perhaps the point of this Year of the World's Indigenous People: to bring the dispossessed out of the shadows, to recognise that they are part of us, and that we cannot give indigenous Australians up without giving up many of our own most deeply held values, much of our own identity - and our own humanity.

Nowhere in the world, I would venture, is the message more stark than in Australia. We simply cannot sweep injustice aside... And, as I say, the starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians...

The message should be that there is nothing to fear or to lose in the recognition of historical truth, or the extension of social justice, or the deepening of Australian social democracy to include Indigenous Australians.

### **December 25                      Reflection for Christmas Day**

Rebirth must always continue. It is essential to keep alive the truth and hope that was given to us, in order to keep the Dream alive and to enrich this nation to become the nation it was meant to be: Great South Land of the Holy Spirit and the True Spirit of the land. The True Spirit within all creation is continually being reborn...

Elizabeth Pike, *Hope Built on the Dreaming*, 2004, NATSIEC Prayer Diary

*May Christ be reborn in our lives, in the lives of our loved ones, and in our world this Christmas.*

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