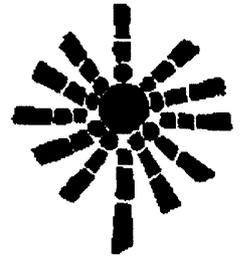


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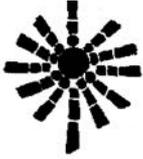


VOTING FOR OUR VALUES
A Fair Deal for All

Australian Election 2016

NetAct Your voice strengthens our voice

A Project of Catholic Social Justice,
Welfare and Educational Agencies
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INTRODUCTION

Voting for our Values A Fair Deal for All

As we prepare for the Federal Election we call to mind the values, which we hope will guide us at this time – human dignity, human rights, the common good, ecological responsibility, a fair deal for all, and preference for those ‘made’ poor. We know that global warming, the unprecedented number of people seeking asylum around the world, inequality, and economic injustices are clear challenges of our time.

In the Christian gospel, Jesus calls us to engage the society in which we live and to do what we can to transform it in line with the values, which he proclaimed by word and example.

For Christians, the work of social transformation is not an optional extra. It stems from God’s own passion for the marginalised and suffering. And it involves every aspect of our lives.

*‘Everything is connected.
Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined
to a sincere love for our fellow human beings
and an unwavering commitment
to resolving the problems of society.’*

**Laudato Si
Pope Francis 2015**

Such foundational belief is intrinsic to the teaching of the Catholic Church

Considering the common good the following points are relevant:...
to provide employment for as many workers as possible;
to take care lest privileged groups arise even amongst the workers themselves;
to maintain a balance between wages and prices;
to make accessible the goods and services for a better life
to as many persons as possible;
either to eliminate or to keep within bounds the inequalities
that exist between different sectors of the economy;
to balance properly any increases in output,
with advances in services provided to citizens,
especially by public authority. (79)

**Mater et Magistra,
Pope John XX111, 1961**

The world we are part of today, asks each person to re-view seriously the way in which we prepare for a Federal Election. Today, all people of good will yearn for the values of justice, a fair deal for all, equality and human decency within leadership. We want to leave the legacy of a just, peaceful and sustainable world for future generations.

At this time of an election we are invited to ask ourselves

- ***Who are the people about whom Jesus would be most concerned at this time?***
- ***How do we show respect and care for our planet earth and for the whole of Creation?***

Mark Peel, a Melbourne social researcher puts it this way: ‘

*The people in the present to whom we now need to listen
are those who have already lost the most ...
who have paid a price – in blasted hopes and dreams –
for the comforts of others.
We need to listen, not out of sympathy or compassion,
but because they have much to tell us.
‘Losers’ know things about the world that winners don’t.
There are things that being privileged doesn’t teach you.
From the lowest rung, you see things
that aren’t visible from the top or the centre.*

Dr Mark Peel,

‘The Forgotten Lessons of the Past: Housing, Security and Justice’

We trust that this Kit will assist you to consider which Parties/candidates would be most likely to work for structures and policies which would support these values and a sustainable way of living on the earth. A real challenge for us all.

VOTING FOR OUR VALUES

A fair Deal for All

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LIST OF PAPERS

1. Asylum Seekers and Refugees
2. Coal Seam Gas
3. Climate Change and Sustainable Development
4. Constitutional Reform
5. Educating for Life
6. Health Care
7. Housing and Homelessness
8. Indigenous Australians: Justice for All
9. Taxation
10. Young People in Australia
11. Timor Sea Border
12. West Papua

A Fair deal for Asylum Seekers

JUSTICE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

All members of the human family have equal dignity and inalienable rights as human beings.

In signing the 1951 Refugee Convention, Australia has acknowledged that states shall:

- not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry, on refugees coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened (Article 31);
- accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the same treatment with respect to assistance as is accorded to their nationals (Article 23);
- issue to refugees lawfully staying in their territory travel documents for travel outside their territory (Article 28).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibits arbitrary detention of children except as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time (Article 37). It protects the right of children to remain under the care of their parents (Article 18), and recognises children's right to education (Article 28).

"We can't deter people fleeing for their lives. They will come. The choice we have is how well we manage their arrival, and how humanely."

Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

ASYLUM SEEKERS

The Australian Government has violated its treaty obligations:

- detaining people in onshore and offshore detention centres for months and years without hope or future
- abdicating responsibility for those seeking protection by shunting them to off-shore islands under the rule of foreign countries.
- keeping babies, children and families in living conditions which threaten their health and security
- violating the UN provisions for the protection of asylum seekers, the care of children and the rights of all people.

Both major parties say they will maintain offshore detention and boat turnbacks

REFUGEES

The number of people forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations is now at the highest level since World War II.

2015 in Australia was marked by the implementation of dramatic changes in Australia's policy, affecting over 30,000 people in the Australian community. These included **significant changes to the determination of refugee status, the re-introduction of Temporary Protection Visas and the removal of government-funded legal assistance.**

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

ASYLUM SEEKERS

It is clear

- that abuse has occurred
- that appropriate action has not been taken
- that by outsourcing its responsibilities for people fleeing for their lives, the Australian Government has failed to honour its obligations
- that abuse has been institutionalised through bipartisan consensus.

The Government has thus failed:

- to establish relevant human rights standards
- to take action when complaints have been made,
- to oversee the behaviour of the company to whom it has outsourced the responsibility of the Detention Centre.

REFUGEES

There have been significant delays in access to citizenship.

There has been denial of access to further education for those on Temporary Protection Visas.

The Job active program is not meeting the needs of refugee jobseekers

Resettled refugees with disabilities are not receiving prompt and appropriate access to services

There is on-going stress caused by the denial of family reunions to refugees who arrived by boat.

WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

WE CAN LOBBY CANDIDATES FOR A SHIFT IN AUSTRALIA'S POLICY:

To honour our commitment to the UN Refugee Convention, and commit to UN provisions for the protection of asylum seekers, the care of children and the rights of all

To abandon the policy of offshore processing and boat turn backs

To amend legislation to ensure regular transparent review of on-shore detention to protect human rights and to prevent situations of indefinite detention

To increase negotiations with other countries towards a agreed regional solution, which recognises Australia's obligations

To increase the refugee resettlement program to 20,000 places in 2016-17 and expand the program progressively in the following four years towards an annual program of 30,000 places

To take special note of the plight of the Rohingya people

To develop a new approach to humanitarian family reunion, reducing existing processing times for family reunion applications

To abandon the reintroduction of temporary protection and convert all temporary visas into permanent protection visas.

To expedite the processing of citizenship applications as a matter of urgency

To reinstate Government funded legal assistance

WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY?

WE CAN

Raise the issues in conversation with friends, with an emphasis on people in greatest need

Engage in reflection on relevant questions, e.g. use of scapegoating, role and responsibility of ordinary citizens

Promote a more sophisticated approach to discussions, recognising that human rights must underpin decisions that are made

Invite guest speakers who can lead a discussion the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, and on the current realities and injustices being suffered

Assist in practical ways – financially, as a volunteer, through prayer, and companionship.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Australian Human Rights Commission
www.humanrights.gov.au/

Refugee Council of Australia
www.refugeecouncil.org.au/

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
www.acsjc.org.au#

ACOSS:
www.acoss.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society:
www.vinnies.org.au#

Gillian Triggs, in her reflection on Refugee Week, highlights the contribution refugees make to Australia

Refugee Week

is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate

the major contribution

that refugees make to Australia.

These refugees have managed to overcome significant obstacles, to forge a new life for themselves and their families in Australia.

Obstacles that most of us in Australia

would find it difficult to even contemplate.

Refugees risk their lives to escape conflict and persecution.

This requires incredible physical, mental and emotional strength”.



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A FAIR DEAL FOR EARTH

COAL SEAM GAS

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

All forms of life – plant, animal and human – are fundamentally interconnected and inter-dependent.

Future generations have a right to inherit a healthily functioning and bio-diverse world.

The water cycle is part of a broader ecosystem on which our food and industry depends and access to safe, clean water is a basic right for humans and other species

The conservation of the earth's resources is vital for our own and the planet's survival.

There needs to be a balance between the priorities of environmental needs and social and economic costs. Earth and people take precedence over profits.

Protection of environmental resources is fundamental to a healthy environment.

'For people it is convenient not to act. We have to make it inconvenient for them not to act. Nothing changes until the pain of not acting is high enough.'

Anote Tong, President of the Republic of Kiribati.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Worth of CSG

The CSG industry is worth many billions and is growing exponentially, particularly in the eastern half of Australia. For the government, it's a welcome bonanza. There is also the promise of jobs in declining rural centres and of income from exports. Opponents argue that these profits are taking precedence over the health of the environment.

Conflict over land use

CSG is often found beneath fertile soil, creating conflict over land use. The Liverpool Plains has high CSG activity, but it currently produces 40% above the national average of food per hectare and contributes approximately \$332 million to GDP annually. The loss of this land to CSG would mean the destruction of prime farming soil and an uncertain future for food production.

Environmental contamination

Our ecosystem is a delicate one, with an unpredictable relationship with land and water. The expanding CSG industry represents a serious threat to the precarious balance of our river systems, farming land and the fresh water aquifers that supply much of our clean drinking water.

Proven Dangers

There have been several major spills of toxic water in the Pilliga state forest. Due to high levels of arsenic, lead and salts, large areas of trees and vegetation were killed.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Coal seam gas has emerged as a major industry in little more than a decade. There has been **strong support by the Government for the CSG industry** as it is a major income earner. There are however significant, well-founded fears.

Conservative estimates suggest coal seam gas wells could draw **300 gegalitres of water from the ground** each year

This industry could produce **as much greenhouse gas as all the cars** on the road in Australia?

Modelling suggests the industry could produce **31 million tonnes of waste salt** over the next 30 years?

In Oklahoma, since CSG mining began, the number of earthquakes has leapt from an average of 2 a year to 567 in 2014

Other Uncertainties continue to emerge

- This is an industry, which is inadequately researched.
- It is of only short-term benefit yet potentially does long-term damage to our environment.
- Damage is done by drilling even when there may be no return of gas.

In summary, it seems that CSG exploration takes water from rural supplies, contributes to pollution, and threatens rock structure, including aquifers.

WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

Contact election candidates by phone or write to him/her (a phone call or letter is worth 50 signatures on a petition). Ask for one or more of the following:

1. **Regulation, better science and data collection**, and a more strategic, transparent approach to CSG exploration
2. **Integration of legislation** which ensures that strategic outcomes are environmentally and socially, as well as economically, sustainable
3. **Greater commitment to renewable and cost-effective energy** based on wind, solar and tidal technologies
4. **Restoration of healthy rivers** particularly the Murray-Darling system through co-operation between Federal and State Governments to implement the Murray Darling Basin Plan
5. **Restrictions imposed on Coal Seam Mining extraction** until a precautionary, considered and integrated strategy is developed – one that includes community consultation and independent scientific input.

Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, one that we care for it and use for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude.

Pope Francis

WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY?

Without objective, scientific transparent and accountable decision-making processes it is impossible to guarantee the safety of CSG exploration.

1. Get educated about the status and practice of CSG mining
2. Discuss the issue with family and friends
3. **View the movies: GasLand and Promised Land,**
4. Join with others in your parish or community and personally meet with your local member or candidate as a group.
5. Join OzGreen "My River Project" which monitors the health of rivers, particularly, the Hunter and Murray-Darling

For More Information

NSW Water

www.water.nsw.gov.au/Home/default.aspx

Coal Seam Gas Mining

www.nwc.gov.au/www/html/2959-coal-seam-gas.asp?intSiteID=1

OzGreen

www.ozgreen.org

ABC

www.abc.net.au/news/specials/coal-seam-gas-by-the-numbers/

The National Toxics Network:

<http://www.ntn.org.au/>

In Laudato Si,
Pope Francis accepts the consensual conclusions of the climate scientists: that through the burning of fossil fuels human action is causing the Earth to warm dangerously; that this warming has already inflicted great harm and is certain to inflict catastrophe in the future, especially on poorer peoples and on future generations; that it will poison the oceans, transform lands into desert, and lead to a tragic loss of bio-diversity; and that if the effects of global warming are to be mitigated there is no alternative to the speedy elimination of fossil fuels and the embrace of renewable sources of energy.

According to the Pope, "this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and unprecedented destruction of eco-systems'.
Indeed, because of its failure to abandon fossil fuels "the post-industrial world may well be remembered as the most irresponsible in human history."

Robert Manne



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A Fair Deal for Indigenous Australians

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

As the 'first peoples' of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold a **unique status** in this land, yet there is no Constitutional acknowledgement of this, or of their continuing cultures, languages and heritage.

Genuine equality for Indigenous citizens requires **active recognition** and acknowledgement of their status and their cultural heritage as a basic international human right.

The Constitution of a democratic nation should enshrine and safeguard the rights and dignity of its 'first peoples'. **This is the ultimate goal.**

Self determination, as an effective policy, offers the way forward in providing real power to Indigenous people.

Genuine reconciliation requires **truthful acknowledgment** of our past history.

A **collaborative approach between Government and Indigenous people** is essential to achieving successful outcomes. Genuine reconciliation requires acknowledgment of the truth of our past history.

Both Constitutional Change and treaty are legitimate concerns for Indigenous Australians.

WHAT CONCERNS US?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to experience lower socio-economic outcomes than other Australians, as well as significant levels of discrimination. **Little has changed since the 1967 referendum** when Indigenous peoples were counted in the census. Failure to address this situation is an ongoing issue for all Australians.

Tensions continue to exist between Indigenous representatives and political leaders on ways to reach a multi-party agreement on the model to take to a referendum. **To date, the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader** have failed to reach consensus on the issue of Constitutional Change or which aspirations they are **prepared to sponsor in the parliament.**

There has been limited involvement of **Aboriginal leaders** in ongoing collaboration on the constitutional aspirations of their people.

Recent initiatives (such as the election of Pat Dodson to the Senate and Stan Grant's appointment to the Referendum council) are welcome shifts, but **greater commitment** to broad consultation involving all Australians is **essential** if a referendum is to be successful.

We know that **amendment does not come easily** - only 8 out of 44 referendum proposals have been passed since Federation.

WHAT ARE THE DESIRED OUTCOMES?

1. A **commitment to a referendum** by all parties, leading up to the election, with an understanding that the new government and the new parliament will proceed to put a referendum question to the people as soon as possible
2. A question, which contains **no element of possible confusion** on legal or other grounds
3. An acknowledgment that we **recognise**
 - Aboriginal prior occupation of the land
 - the enduring relationships of Indigenous peoples with land
 - the continuing cultures, languages and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
4. A **supplementary provision** that Parliament be given power to make laws with respect to these elements acknowledged by the Australian people.
5. A complementary **inclusion of a new Indigenous body in the Constitution** to advise Parliament when new laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are being considered
6. A constitutional ban on **racial discrimination** (although not simple and needing to deal first with amendments to *the Native Title Act*.)

WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

We can ask politicians:

- To support the need for Constitutional change and set up and encourage forums to educate the wider community on the issues
- To **advance** consultation and decisions related to both **Constitutional change and treaty**
- To recognise that the **land** was **never ceded** to later arrivals
- To ensure any change is meaningful, and any **symbolic change is one step** in a process towards full recognition
- To **listen to the Indigenous Elders** and empower them to consult for the necessary changes in their communities
- To acknowledge the contribution of Aboriginal Australians to the ANZAC story and the development of the land.

To ask that amendments

- Contribute to a more unified and reconciled nation
- Be of benefit to, and accord with, the wishes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Be capable of being supported by an overwhelming majority of Australians from across the political and social spectrums
- Be technically and legally sound.



WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY AND COMMUNALLY?

We can:

- inform ourselves and initiate conversations within our communities
- talk to family and friends
- invite guest speakers to lead a discussion on the issues outlined in this paper
- invite **Recognise** to speak with your community about Constitutional Change

SOME HELPFUL RESOURCES

ANTaR website www.antar.org.au & www.nsw.antar.org.au *The Conversation about Constitutional Recognition*

YOU ME UNITY equality and recognition. A national conversation about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Constitutional Recognition. Discussion Paper – May 2011

No Small Change The Road to Recognition for Indigenous **FOR** Australia (2015) Frank Brennan SJ

Frank Brennan *The Path to a successful referendum* Paper delivered to The Sydney Institute 27May, 2015

MORE INFORMATION

Justreinvest.org.au
www.antar.org.au
www.oxfam.org.au
www.acsjc.org.au
www.erc.org.au



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'What can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow.'

The river is the river and the sea is the sea. Salt water and fresh, two separate domains. Each has its own complex patterns, origins, stories. Even though they come together they will always exist in their own right. My hopes for reconciliation are like that.

Pat Dodson

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A Fair deal for Education

EDUCATING FOR LIFE

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

It is our belief that **education is the right of every child.**

All students have the right to **equitable, intrinsically valuable, and accessible** education

Quality education for all students is a **critical investment** that Australia makes for its future.

Parents have the primary **right and obligation** to ensure the best education for their children.

Both the **Commonwealth and State Governments** play a **critical role** in the provision of funding that is stable, long term and committed to all students.

An **equitable distribution of resources** takes into particular account the needs of students disadvantaged by social, economic, cultural or physical factors.

The **valuing of teachers** leads logically to the provision of adequate resources for teacher education, remuneration, and the ongoing teacher development.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Funding

Funding for education is emerging as a critical issue for this election across all educational institutions, from preschool to university. Both major Parties are promising significant funding for schools – the Coalition (resisting Gonski) committing \$1.2 billion, and Labor (supporting Gonski) \$4.5 billion.

The Government's previous policy to fully deregulate university fees has been taken off the agenda. About \$2 billion in cuts to higher education however are contained in the 2016 budget.

Increasing numbers of students, the demands of technology and educational requirements are fast outstripping the funding allocated to schools.

Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy and numeracy results for students have declined in the past decade. On a range of 35 educational measures, Australia (in comparison with 27 other OECD countries), falls below the average on more than half.

Catholic Schools

Despite the fact that Catholic schools educate one in five students, Catholic schools receive just 21% of annual recurrent costs and 2% of the capital funding.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Specific **cuts in funding**, in TAFE, Abstudy and in Adult Migrant Education Services have negatively impacted on students in disadvantaged groups, especially those in greatest need, and those with the least powerful voices.

In all areas of Post-school education, rising fees, the deregulated HECS system, and mission-based compacts have resulted in a **decreasing proportion of disadvantaged students proceeding to tertiary study.**

The politicisation of funding detracts from long-term planning.

The correlation between poor student performance and aggregated social disadvantage is stronger in Australia than in any other comparable western nation

Educational trends have led to an **overemphasis on standardised tests** as the benchmark of a school's standards, exacerbated by the ill-conceived use of Naplan results to compare schools.

Teacher shortage, particularly in specific subject areas, is exacerbated by the **low status of, and limited career paths** in, the teaching profession.

The **complex web of schools funding agreements** leads to often falsely argued disputes between different systems of education.



WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

WE CAN LOBBY CANDIDATES:

To make an explicit commitment to the adequate provision of funding for all stages of schooling, from pre-school to post-compulsory education:

- comparable to OECD standards
- compensating for differences of social status, material wealth, geographic location and resource levels
- providing equitable access to new technologies (to overcome the digital divide between the information rich and the information poor)
- increasing funding to early childhood education, so that it is accessible and affordable for the whole community, not just the wealthy
- committing to all aspects of post-school education to compensate for the cuts of the past 10 years
- affording access to adequate health and welfare services so that there is an effective interface between education and health
- providing for the professional development of teachers to meet rapidly changing demands
- reviewing and simplifying the complex web of schools funding agreements

The Gonski funding system turns everything on its head; rather than being needs-blind and sector-based, it is sector-blind and needs-based.

Ken Boston

WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY?

We can

Inform ourselves about **standards** of education in Australia and about the causes and results of policies of the past ten years.

Support **increased funding** to all schools in conversation with friends, with an emphasis on students in greatest need

Engage with family and friends in conversation, which recognises that, while funding is significant, education policies should be assessed holistically in the context of broader considerations of what schools and students need.

Promote a more **sophisticated approach** to education, which acknowledges that education is more than basic skills testing

Invite **guest speakers** who can lead a discussion on the vision, aims and practices in education today.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

National Catholic Education Commission

<http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au>

Department of Education and training

<https://www.education.gov.au>

Catholic Schools Office Sydney

www.catholicschools.nsw.edu.au

Association of Independent Schools

<https://www.aisnsw.edu.au>

Board of Studies

<https://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/>

*A century from now,
what shall be said
of our journey in these times?
And who shall the shapers have been?
Who shall have shaped the future more?
The hopeful dreamers
who were strong enough
to suffer for the dream?
Or the fearful pessimists
who were convinced
that dreaming and hope
are for sleepers only,
not for those awake to the age?*

*A century from now,
shall hope and humour
have been strong enough to enable living
with unanswerable questions?
Or shall the pain
that a transitional age necessarily brings
have caused a retreat to old answers
that no longer acknowledge new questions?*

*A century from now,
we shall have indeed journeyed ...
and real journeyers know
that the direction is always chosen
by those who make the journey.
Who shall choose the direction?
...So the question is still the same ...*

*A century from now,
what shall be said
of our human journey in these times?
And who shall the shapers have been?*

Lilian Smith



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A Fair Deal for the Environment

OUR COMMON HOME

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

All forms of life – plant, animal and human – are fundamentally interconnected and inter-dependent.

The conservation of the earth's resources is vital for our own and the planet's survival.

Future generations have a right to inherit a healthily functioning and bio-diverse environment.

All elements of the environment have intrinsic value, irrespective of the extent to which they can be utilised by humans.

The water cycle is part of a broader ecosystem on which our food and industry depends and access to safe, clean water is a basic right for humans and other species.

There needs to be a balance between the priorities of environmental needs and social and economic costs.

Protection of environmental resources is fundamental to a healthy environment.

"What we are doing to the environment is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another."

— Chris Maser

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The limitations of the debate

The growth in material consumption is beyond the environmental limits of the earth

Dependence on Consumption

Australia, with the rest of the global west, is reliant on a snowballing consumption of resources.

Coal, Gas and Minerals

Despite the Paris Agreement, the Australian Government continues to support (through contracts, financial subsidies, and legislation), the coal, gas mineral industries. Currently, the Government gives annually over **\$7.7 billion to support the production and consumption of fossil fuels.**

Environmental Destruction

- As the Adani mine seems set to proceed, the **Great Barrier Reef is suffering the worst coral-bleaching** event in its history.
- The devastating fires in Canada indicate the **accelerating results of increasing extreme weather events.**
- **Waterways are being contaminated** by run-off from businesses using chemically-based fertilisers and pesticides.
- The **proposal** that South Australia **build a nuclear waste dump** on Sacred Aboriginal land, encapsulates the priority of economics over the environment.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Australia currently has an economy that depends on an over-*consumption* of energy. We have the world's highest average emissions per person.

Our current consumption of **non renewable resources** i.e. coal and oil, is **increasing exponentially** the rate of climate change.

This over-reliance on fossil fuels, and rising greenhouse gas emissions pollute the atmosphere and exacerbate climate change.

Australia is the **world's largest coal exporter**, and if Adani goes ahead, it will have the largest mine.

Extreme weather events, increasing temperatures and droughts have serious social, economic and health consequences, including increasing displacement of populations

Mining has taken water from rural supplies, contributed to pollution, and threatened rock structures, including aquifers.

New water coal-fired power stations are being planned and existing ones upgraded.

The privatisation of water supply has led to decreased water security and also removed government responsibility for an essential right.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

1. **Reduction of reliance on fossil and nuclear fuels** and conversion to renewable, cost-effective energy based on wind, solar and tidal technologies
2. **Integration of legislation** which ensures strategic planning and development outcomes are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable
3. **Regulation, better science and data collection**, and a more strategic, transparent approach to environmental issues
4. **Restoration of healthy rivers** particularly the Murray-Darling system through co-operation between the Federal Government and other States to implement the Murray Darling Basin Plan
5. **Greater water efficiency**
 - Technology used in sympathy with natural ecosystems- so that water is used several times without depriving its ecosystem uses
 - Continued retro-fitting of homes with water-efficient shower heads, toilets, tanks and recycled water
6. **Guarantees that desalination** will not be used to meet supply needs when storage levels are above 30%
7. **A moratorium imposed on Coal Seam Mining extraction** until a precautionary, considered and integrated strategy is developed – one which includes community consultation and independent scientific input.



WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

There are significant points of difference between the major parties. This is an area where voters can hope to influence policies:

We can lobby candidates

1. To commit to the removal of wasteful resources on subsidies and tax breaks for polluting industries towards clean renewable energy
2. to confirm the transition from fossil fuels to 100% renewable energy by 2050
3. to commit then to strategies of rapid emissions reduction and peaking by 2020, in order to keep the 1.5c limit within reach
4. to institute greater flows of finance, especially for adaptation and loss/damage
5. To call for fossil fuel divestment and reinvestment in renewables and low carbon solutions, both within our own communities, and by engaging companies on climate change.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Climate Institute:
www.climateinstitute.org.au

Catholic Earthcare Australia:
www.catholicearthcareoz.net

Coal Seam Gas Mining
www.nwc.gov.au/www/html/2959-coal-seam-gas.asp?intSiteID=1

OzGreen
www.ozgreen.org



WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY?

1. Challenge the limitations of the jobs and growth mantra
2. Do an energy audit to find where energy consumption could be reduced
3. Contribute to cleaner water by not using cleaning products containing phosphates and chemicals
4. Expand the use of solar
5. Implement recycling and composting
6. At community events, replace disposable cups, plates and cutlery with washable or compostable items
7. Examine environmental efforts in your local community.
8. Encourage faith communities to reduce emissions and to support and stand in solidarity with communities already impacted by climate change

Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude.
Pope Francis

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A Fair Deal for Health Care

HEALTH CARE REFORM

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

We believe that **health** is a social good that is **basic to the fabric of society**, and that it is a **fundamental right of every person**.

We believe that a properly funded, universal health care system **protects the rights of all**.

It is **the responsibility of Government** to provide and fund quality health care programs and services.

A system, **funded from government, non-government and private sources**, is critical to quality care, based on equity, universality and ease of access.

A **person-centred system**, rather than one that is facility-centred, or primarily based on profit-making, is central to health as a social good.

Frail, chronically ill or marginalised persons have special needs, and any **system that disadvantages those on the margins undermines the rights of all**.

Planning for adequate health and aged care infrastructures and services **underpins services into the future**

When we have sold all our public assets, where will future funds come from? There has to be another way at this time.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Health and socio-economic status
Levels of health for Australians are increasingly dependent on socio-economic status.

Cutbacks
The 2016 budget (due to take effect in 2017) proposes taking **\$57 billion over 10 years from the nation's health budget**. The Government also intends to freeze the Medicare rebate.

Indigenous health
There are plans to cut funding to **specific Aboriginal-controlled services and programs**.

Mental illness
The provision of **integrated residential treatment and rehabilitation facilities** are threatened by health cuts.

Aged Care
The demands of an ageing population continue to undermine infrastructures and services. Proposed cuts will impact particularly on smaller institutions.

Rural and regional Australia
Decreasing numbers of rural health workers, and reduced access to healthcare, are critical issues.

Government Funding
Hospitals are being forced to cover funding shortfalls by raising hundreds of millions of dollars in external revenue.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Levels of health continue to disadvantage Australians. The **lowest 20%** of income earners experience the **highest levels of poor health outcomes**.

The freezing of the Medicare rebate means that over time, GPs will earn relatively less, while their costs will increase.

The current **lack of collaboration** between Federal and State Governments, and the non-government sectors, (key to the delivery of effective strategies and action) is **exacerbating low health outcomes**.

Indigenous Australians remain the **most disadvantaged group** in Australia as measured by life expectancy, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and access to services.

Evidence shows that **mental illness and substance dependency** frequently co-exist

Funding models for the care of **older Australians** continue to create major difficulties, especially for smaller institutions.

Decreasing support for **rural people and their carers** are resulting in lower health outcomes.

Hospital funding remains inadequate despite promised increases.

WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

The current debate over funding between Commonwealth and State Governments has thrown the health debate into disarray. Increased funding is essential and cannot occur without collaboration. **Patient care must never take second place to politics.**

WE CAN THEREFORE LOBBY CANDIDATES:

- To commit to **protection of the Medicare System**
- to commit to **negotiation based on health and social needs**, not political agenda
- to develop clear action plans that focus on **reducing inequalities** in health outcomes and services
- to **target Indigenous health** as a major priority
- To commit to the development of a **mental health system** that ensures access to mental health care, especially for homeless people and those who find it difficult to engage with the health care system
- To make **access to aged care an entitlement** to those assessed as needing it
- To **broaden the criteria and services for rural and disadvantaged people.**

WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY?

We can **share ideas** with our own community.

We can **work with like-minded groups.**

We can **investigate possibilities** in our area of influence and action.

We can **raise awareness** of Health issues by inviting representatives of Catholic Health Australia and community advocates and practitioners to speak with us.

We can **advocate** with religious and community groups to investigate realities and possibilities within their own sectors (N.B. on any given day, one in ten Australians in a hospital or aged care bed are being cared for by a Catholic health or aged care service).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Catholic Health Care Services:
www.catholichealthcare.com.au

Catholic Health Australia:
www.cha.org.au

ACOSS:
www.acoss.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society:
www.vinnies.org.au

Australian catholic social Justice Council
www.acsjc.org.au

[Patients before Profits](#)
[Nurses against Privatisation](#)

MAY GOD BLESS US WITH DISCOMFORT

at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

MAY GOD BLESS US WITH ANGER

at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for economic justice for all people.

MAY GOD BLESS US WITH TEARS

to shed for those who suffer from pain, hunger, homelessness and rejection, so that we may reach out our hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.

AND MAY GOD BLESS US WITH ENOUGH FOOLISHNESS

to believe that we can make a difference in the world so that we can do what others claim cannot be done.'

Source: Education for Justice.



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A fair deal for all Australians

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

As **Australians**, we hold that

- every Australian has the **right to a home**
- adequate housing is a basic human need,
- adequate housing is a fundamental human right (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights, No.25*).

We hold that **affordable, appropriate and secure housing**, which offers safety, privacy and reasonable security of tenure, is fundamental to adequate housing provision.

We hold that access to quality, affordable housing, which includes **accessibility to transport, employment and community services**, is central to community well-being, and provides a foundation for family and social stability.

We hold that appropriate housing contributes to improved **health and educational outcomes**, as well as to a productive workforce.

We hold that the **role of Government is critical** in ensuring that the housing rights of people are met, particularly for those on low incomes and those with special needs.

We hold that **the right to a home** is basic to the Australian belief in a fair go for all.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

2016 Budget

The Turnbull budget has **largely ignored** the issue of **housing affordability**. There is no increase to public housing funding, no increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance, no new money for rental affordability incentives, and no new financing option for affordable housing. There is no response to the Senate inquiry into housing affordability or reform.

Housing Affordability

Housing is **the major cost** facing every vulnerable household, and the 2016 budget offers no relief. Less than 0.1 % of rental properties are affordable for a single person on Newstart or Youth Allowance.

Housing Stock

There is an **insufficient supply** of affordable housing available for purchase throughout Australia.

Housing Stress

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that almost one million households are now living in rental or mortgage stress, i.e. are **paying more than 30%** of gross income on recurrent housing costs.

Homelessness

Federal budget cuts to homelessness services, mental health programs, community legal centres, women's refuges and youth shelters will be hit hard by the axing of a \$115 million program aimed at addressing the needs of over 100,000 homeless Australians.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

In the past fifty years, Australia has **moved from** a society where housing was seen as a **universal right**, to one where it is now predominantly viewed as a **safety net** for those most in need.

Cutbacks in Commonwealth and state funding have led to increased rental and mortgage stress, and a reduction in the number of services to assist those suffering financial stress, and domestic and family violence.

Social problems (violence, financial insecurity, unemployment, underemployment, delinquency, marriage breakdown, infirmity and old age) have been shown to be aggravated by the lack of, or inadequate, housing

We know that the **negative impact** of inadequate housing has exacerbated the need for spending on health, prisons, and welfare provisions. In many large housing estates, the lack of support systems has resulted in significant instability.

Governments have named **domestic violence** as a significant cause of homelessness, yet have failed to provide affordable housing to alleviate the problem. Refugees are made up increasingly of women and children (also victims of domestic violence) and youth (unemployed, gay and lesbian, drug addicted)

WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

Housing will continue to be a critical issue, whichever Party wins power. Unless all candidates accept that housing is fundamental to a civil society, it will continue to be a growing financial and social burden for the whole community.

WE CAN LOBBY CANDIDATES:

to commit to **realistic levels of funding** for housing, regardless of other calls made on revenue

To commit revenue to create new, purpose-built, safe, affordable accommodation for vulnerable people, and especially the elderly, and disabled, victims of domestic violence, homeless indigenous Australians, and those suffering from mental health issues.

to develop **new models of cooperative housing** for low-income households

To increase the level of social housing and **upgrade existing stock**

To provide funding for public and community housing, and **incentives for the development of affordable housing** in the private market

To implement **rent-setting in community housing**, targeting low-income households and to **increase rent allowance** in areas of need

To legislate to guarantee **adequate protection (tenants and landlords)**

To **invest in emergency housing** for those experiencing severe stress

WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY?

We can **share ideas** with our own community.

We can **work with like-minded groups**.

We can **investigate possibilities** in our area of influence and action.

We can **raise awareness** of housing issues by inviting community and social housing advocates and practitioners to speak with us.

We can **advocate** with religious and community groups to investigate housing possibilities within their own sectors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Shelter NSW:
www.shelternsw.org.au

ACOSS: www.acoss.org.au

Churches Community Housing:
www.churcheshousing.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society:
www.vinnies.org.au

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
www.acsjc.org.au

With the bricks of tolerance

*We will build together
a better world.*

With the bricks of belonging

*We will build together
a better world.*

With the bricks of understanding

*We will build together
a better world.*

With the bricks of sharing

*We will build together
a better world.*

With the bricks of hope

*We will build together
a better world.*

With the bricks of community

*We will build together
a better world.*

With the bricks of love

*We will build together
a better world.*

Author unknown



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A Fair Deal for All Australians

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

As the 'first peoples' of Australia, Indigenous people hold a unique status in this land.

Genuine equality for indigenous citizens, as a basic human right, requires an **acknowledgement of their unique identity** and cultural heritage, and an active recognition of cultural differences.

The Constitution of a democratic nation **enshrines and safeguards the rights and dignity of its 'first peoples'**, and collaboration between Government and Indigenous people is essential to achieving this.

Self determination, as an effective policy, offers the way forward in providing real power to Indigenous people.

Genuine reconciliation requires truthful acknowledgment of our past history.

Everyone is entitled to the enjoyment of **human rights** without discrimination of any kind, including on the basis of race.

The principles of **prevention, early intervention and social inclusion** are fundamental to decision-making and service delivery.

Effective policy minimises the alienation and marginalisation of people.

WHAT CONCERNS US AT THIS TIME?

Aboriginal people continue to experience lower socio-economic outcomes than other Australians, as well as significant levels of discrimination.

Health: There is still a seventeen-year difference between the life expectancy of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

Education: A lack of basic literacy skills, a shortage of teachers and resources continue to impact negatively on Indigenous children.

Housing and Unemployment: serious problems in both areas continue throughout all Aboriginal communities, with ongoing generational effects.

Services: Inadequate policing, roads, water, electricity, sewerage, garbage disposal services are found across Indigenous communities – a situation other Australian citizens would not tolerate.

Imprisonment: In the past decade, the incarceration rate for Indigenous men has more than doubled; Indigenous youths now comprise more than 50 per cent of juveniles in detention (despite being only 3% of the population); and, for Indigenous women, the rate of imprisonment is accelerating even faster – a 74 per cent increase in the past 15 years.

Ongoing mandatory sentencing, imprisonment for fine defaults, "paperless" arrest laws, tough bail

and parole conditions and punitive sentencing regimes all contribute to high incarceration rates, along with funding cuts to frontline legal services and inadequate resourcing for much needed programs.

Treaty and Constitutional Recognition: Debate continues to around these critical areas often politicised for electoral advantage.

Approach to policy development and implementation: The Federal Government's current approach to Indigenous affairs is its centralised, 'top-down' approach to policies. The contentious issue of the cashless welfare card is symptomatic of this. There is little consideration of the sense of disempowerment, stigma and punitive perceptions experienced by communities against the possible benefits of such a program.

Imbalance in media reports: Unbalanced media reporting reinforces the stereotyping and negative images of Indigenous people, with very little reporting of the success stories, or the culture and strength of leadership in many men and women. Such imbalance helps to ignite the underlying racism, (including institutionalised racism), which still exists in our nation.

Lack of Will: Politicians lack the will to make indigenous issues a priority. Successful programs are often terminated because of short term funding and selective choosing of Indigenous leaders.

WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

WE CAN LOBBY CANDIDATES:

To engage in a **bi-partisan, formal way with Indigenous peoples** on matters affecting their social, cultural and economic interests, as well as their political status within the nation

To entrench a vote for both government and civil society so that meaningful involvement in decisions affecting their future will be guaranteed

To **advance** consultation and decisions related to **Constitutional change and treaty**

To **introduce effective long-term strategies to eliminate disadvantage**, and ensure the provision of adequate, recurrent funding without unfair conditions

To ensure that all **legislation, policies and programs** are consistent with **international human rights standards**

To **develop a sound framework**, which is people-centred and which recognises the social and cultural diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

To **build on the large body of research** already completed, prior to instituting new studies

To **promote a more balanced approach in reporting** (to eliminate discriminatory coverage and encourage education on current realities)

Establish a clear accountability framework to ensure that all relevant bodies

- remain focussed on the ultimate outcomes of policy
- are able to be held accountable for their rate of progress in addressing human rights breaches.

WHAT CAN WE DO AS A COMMUNITY?

Inform ourselves about the issues pertaining to ongoing discrimination and racism around Treaty and Constitutional Change

Invite representatives from **"Recognise" to lead a discussion** about issues related to Constitutional change

Engage formally and with family and friends in the consultations regarding both **Treaty and Constitutional Change**

Promote Diversionary/culturally appropriate programs that work with young people to detect signs of problem behaviour can help divert young people from entering, or re-entering the juvenile justice system. This requires **adequate funding**, guaranteed for the long term and subject to independent review.

By developing a **bipartisan and community approach** to innovative juvenile justice, all Parties could work together to achieve the necessary and desired change.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Justreinvest.org.au

www.hreoc.gov.au

www.antar.org.au

www.oxfam.org.au

www.acsjc.org.au

www.erc.org.au

*We have our heroes.
Albert Namatjira painted the soul
of this nation.
Vincent Lingiari put our hand
for Gough Whitlam to pour the sand
of his country and say,
'this is my country.'
Cathy Freeman lit the torch
of the Olympic games.
But every time we are lured
into the light,
we are mugged by the darkness
of this country's history.
**Of course racism is killing
the Australian Dream.**
It is self evident that it's killing
the Australian dream.
But we are better than that.*

*The people who stood up and
supported Adam Goodes and said,
'no more,'
they are better than that.
The people who marched
across the bridge for reconciliation,
they are better than that.
My wife who is not Indigenous
is better than that.*

*And one day, I want to stand here
and be able to say as proudly
and sing as loudly
as anyone else in this room,
Australians **all**, let us rejoice.*

Stan Grant



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Contributing our Fair Share

TAXATION FOR GREATER JUSTICE

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

The Federal Government plays an important role in maintaining **social cohesion and guaranteeing equity** in the community.

Distributive justice recognises that the **burdens of the community should be shared** and reflect the reality that different members of society have varying abilities to contribute.

The Government has a direct role to play in **redistributing the wealth in society towards those in greatest need**. The taxation system plays a vital role in this redistribution.

An effective taxation system **encourages socially and environmentally responsible outcomes**.

Federal revenue raised from taxes **supports vital social services** and contributes to the provision of services by State Governments.

An effective taxation system **encourages balanced and sustainable growth**. In order to maintain current living standards, and increase the living standards of the least well off. It collects sufficient revenue to allow the Government to maintain funding commitments and expand commitments where necessary.

An effective budget **encourages job creation**.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The budgets of the past three years have included benefits for upper middle class and wealthy Australians, but have done little for people on the lowest incomes. They have been underpinned by a **culture that subordinates the welfare of people to economic growth and the making of wealth**.

There has been **nothing** in these budgets **to improve the situation for the 105,000 homeless people** on the streets each night, nor for the 200,000 Australians on the queue for social housing.

For many of the **benefits** that have been embedded in the budget, there have been **corresponding cutbacks**.

Australia is a relatively low taxing and spending nation compared to other OECD countries. It is hard to justify a system where the already rich keep getting even richer.

The **cutbacks in foreign aid** reflect the Government's lack of concern for some of the most vulnerable people in our world. In doing this, Australia is acting also against its own goals of combating terrorism and the increasing numbers of refugees across the world.

From these budgets, a number of plans have remained in place: **significant cuts from schools and hospitals, to community support agencies, and as well, to environmental initiatives**.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

The effects of growing inequality are real and corrosive in society, and the budgets of the past three years have reinforced this trend.

Their clear impact is to identify the common good with the interests of affluent and well-off investors, and in a lesser way with small business. Everything else, such as a welfare system, health, education and wages, are seen as cost burdens to be kept strictly under control.

Every piece of evidence about these budgets has demonstrated a severe disadvantage for low income Australians while barely affecting those who are wealthy (especially the sixty-six Australians who currently possess more wealth than the million poorest Australians).

There seem to be two targets in the Coalition budgets:

- The most vulnerable members of society – especially**
 - young unemployed people,
 - single parents,
 - low-paid families with school-age children,
 - the unwell needing medical attention,
 - Aboriginal people,
 - people with disabilities
- The government's ideological targets:**
 - the ABC,
 - the CSIRO,
 - Renewable energy sector,
 - foreign aid.

WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

WE CAN LOBBY CANDIDATES:

To strengthen the tax system to ensure that those who can afford to contribute do so, that the policy encourages growth, offers taxpayers value for money, is fair to all and prioritises support for those who need it

In targeting those in need, to avoid blaming the victim, as the budgets of the past three years have done

To develop a robust safety net for those unable to continue to work due to poor health or disability

To commit to removal of wasteful resources on subsidies and tax breaks for polluting industries

To take resolute action on corporate tax avoidance

To commit to reforming negative gearing and upper class welfare

To strengthen again the support for regulatory agencies and statutory bodies to ensure the enforcement of just regulations

To establish a level playing field in future planning charges and Infrastructure levies, by removing inequities that are adding to costs

Through structural reforms such as these, Governments can afford to continue to provide essential payments and services and to build a strong economy and community.

'Paying a lot of taxes just means you make a lot of money, and it is hard, frankly, to complain about that.'

Wealthy CEO

WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY?

WE CAN

Develop a habit and a culture of looking at the taxation system as our contribution to a fair deal for all, rather than a tax burden.

Inform ourselves about the impact of the budget and about the causes and results of policies of the past ten years.

Raise the issues in conversation with friends, with an emphasis on people in greatest need

Promote a more sophisticated approach to budget analysis, which recognises that a fair deal must underpin decisions that are made

Invite guest speakers who can lead a discussion on the vision, aims and practices today.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

ACOSS:
www.acoss.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society:
www.vinnies.org.au#

Australian catholic social Justice Council
www.acsjc.org.au#



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We live in a post trickle-down theory world, where people are sensitised to government-enabled corporate excesses and have legitimate reason to doubt whether elected officials are capable and willing to serve their interests.

The lesson from the federal budgets of the past three years is that there are on-negotiables around the function of government to provide the conditions that ensure the flourishing of all.

The credibility test for political parties – and the central question around fiscal policy – is no longer about economic growth, but growth for whom

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A Fair Deal for Young People

YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

We believe that the rights of young people are not conceded rights that come to them derived from family or from the state: their human rights are personal and inalienable.

Good health, affordable housing and equitable, high quality and accessible education are basic to the well-being of young people, and provide a foundation for stability at all stages of their lives.

A just industrial relations system is designed to serve social, as well as economic goals, allowing young people to live and work in a manner befitting their human dignity and their responsibilities to their community and their world.

Governments are obliged to ensure that young people whose work leaves them little or no bargaining power have adequate safeguards on conditions and wages.

Legislation enacted by Governments needs to protect and encourage the wholehearted involvement of young people in the political process.

Future generations have a right to inherit a healthy and bio-diverse environment.

The allocation of resources demonstrates the seriousness of Government rhetoric about the importance of young people as society's future.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Widening Gap

Growing inequalities in Australia are particularly evident in the lives of young people and seen in decreasing educational access, employment, low wage growth, housing, and health (especially mental health). 15% of young people currently live in poverty.

Education

The proportion of students continuing on to post-compulsory education has decreased in the past ten years. Specific cuts in TAFE funding, in Abstudy and in Migrant Education Services have negatively impacted on students in disadvantaged groups, especially those in greatest need and those with the least powerful voices.

Young Indigenous Australians

Young Indigenous Australians are suffering significant levels of disadvantage because of deepening racism, the mainstreaming of government policies, distorted media portrayal, high rates of imprisonment, and housing and health problems.

Young Australians in rural areas

Microeconomic reform and the withdrawal of services (e.g. banks, rail and postal services, health and education) have created hardship, unemployment, lower wages and greater inequity across rural Australia. Many young people have been forced to leave in search of educational and work opportunities.

Housing Affordability

House prices have increased significantly and are increasingly out of the reach of young people. Importantly, the largest proportional increases in house sale prices occurred in the traditionally lower cost housing areas.

Homelessness has also increased among young people. 42% of homeless people are under the age of 24.

Industrial Relations

Industrial legislation has increased the power of employers, and decreased the power of young workers to negotiate. Those without skills or experience have less power to negotiate an individual contract, leaving many young people vulnerable to exploitation.

Casualisation of work

Casual employees are significantly younger than permanent employees, with 39.3 per cent of all casuals aged less than 25 years.

Casuals have fewer rights and less security, which can deny them access to credit, such as a home loan. Possible changes to penalty rates will have important consequences for young people.

Environmental threats

Climate change and extreme weather events, increasing temperatures and droughts have serious social, economic and health consequences, which will be environmentally unsustainable for the future of our country and our world.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

A society has an obligation to **protect and encourage the wholehearted involvement of young people** in the social, political and economic life of the community. It is incumbent upon the Government and the community to promote this in legislation and culture.

WE CAN THEREFORE LOBBY CANDIDATES and work with them in the following areas:

Education.

Commit to the adequate provision of funding for all stages of schooling

Provide equitable access for post-school education (TAFE and university), and develop structures which make participation in education an attractive option for young people.

Health.

Commit to a strong Medicare system and frame target levels of expenditure and taxation to ensure that all Australians have access to affordable health care (which includes dental care). Strengthen outreach youth health facilities.

Housing.

Provide incentives for the development of affordable housing in the private market, and funding for public and community housing in areas of need.

Needs-based funding

Increase needs-based funding for young people to provide greater equity in the areas of rural, refugee and indigenous health, education, employment, housing and infrastructure.

Employment .

Promote the rights, conditions, and bargaining positions of all workers, ensuring that vulnerable young workers are not forced to negotiate in unequal bargaining situations

Ensure that re-employment training is useful and linked to real job opportunities and wage subsidies to provide paid employment opportunities in real workplaces

Guarantee clear protections to prevent exploitation of young people, or displacement of jobs.

The Political Process

Promote involvement of young people in the political process through strategies, which protect and encourage their registration as voters and their participation as citizens in political debate and advocacy.

Environment.

Promote ongoing research and the use of alternative fuels and energy efficiencies, with clear performance indicators.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ACOSS:

www.acoss.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society:

www.vinnies.org.au

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

www.acsjc.org.au

ACTU

www.actu.asn.au



NetAct

*This election is crucial
for the future of penalty rates,
for Medicare
and for our education system.*

*This election is crucial
For a well-resourced universal
healthcare system,
penalty rates for working
unsociable hours,
proper funding for education
and a tax system
where all pay their fair share*

*In 2014, the average CEO
earned 373 times more
than the average worker.*

*While young employees
at big corporations
like McDonald's
earn so little
they need government help
just to pay bills
and put food on the table,
CEOs are taking home pay
packages worth tens of millions.*

ACOSS

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A Fair and Permanent Border in the Timor Sea

Time to draw the line

VALUES

Australia values fairness. Australia has responsibilities and should operate according to international law.

Every nation has the right to sovereign borders.

Borders are determined under internationally accepted rules.

In the case of dispute, nations can appeal to institutions established to arbitrate for the common good.

Australians have the right to borders which are secure and inalienable. Australia's neighbours have identical rights to secure borders.

Australia's integrity and international standing are affected by its decisions and actions.

CONCERNS

There is no internationally accepted maritime boundary between Timor Leste and Australia.

Timorese negotiators were spied on by Australia during their planning for discussions, thus putting their negotiations at a disadvantage.

As a result, the Timorese government now requires discussions on the border.

The Timorese Prime Minister has requested formal discussions with Australia.

The Australian Prime Minister has refused.

Australia has now been directed to be part of a United Nations [compulsory conciliation](#).

DESIRABLE OUTCOMES

1. The Australian government complies with all provisions of the compulsory conciliation.

2. The Australian government and the Timorese government agree to formal discussions at the earliest possible date.

3. A structured engagement designed to settle maritime boundaries to be undertaken in good faith as a result of these discussions.

4. In the event of disagreement, the governments submit to the jurisdiction of United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).



His Excellency Xanana Gusmão visited Sydney recently and asked for our support in persuading the Australian government to negotiate a permanent border

Send a message to your Federal MP and Senate candidates for NSW to let them know you want Australia to start talking with Timor-Leste so that the border between Timor-Leste and Australia can be finalised.

For a direct email to go to your local candidates for both the House of Representative and the Senate, click [here](#) and follow the instructions.

You might like to write a letter and send it by ordinary mail or by your personal email to Members or Senators. Here is a sample:

Dear M.....

I am requesting your support for discussions between Australia and Timor-Leste (East Timor) on a voluntary, binding international resolution for a permanent maritime boundary.

Xanana Gusmão, Timor-Leste's Liberation Leader, First President, former Prime Minister and now Chief Negotiator for Maritime Boundaries visited Australia recently and spoke about how the Timorese people see this issue and why it is the time to draw the line. He spoke of the 'wall of silence' that has greeted his nation's request for formal discussions with Australia. He pointed out that Australia is 'on the wrong side of history'.

Mr Gusmão reminded us how good we are at telling other nations to obey international law, as in the South China Sea, but at the same time ignoring it in our own backyard. I agree with his assessment. Establishing permanent maritime boundaries is a matter of national priority for Timor-Leste, as the final step in realising its sovereignty as an independent state.

I am very disappointed that because Australian authorities refuse to undertake discussions with Timor-Leste, it has been forced to seek compulsory conciliation under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. As an Australian citizen, I am also offended that Australian governments have not yet established a complete, internationally recognised border for our nation.

The Australian Labor Party has promised that, if elected, it will commence discussions on a voluntary, binding international resolution for a permanent maritime boundary between Australia and Timor-Leste. I am hoping you will commit to bi-partisan support for direct and formal border discussions.

This is an issue that will help determine my vote on 2 July.

Yours sincerely,

Maritime Boundary Office Timor-Leste

<http://www.gfm.tl/>

Information

<http://www.gfm.tl/media/publications/>

Timor Sea Justice Forum

<http://www.timfo.org>

WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY AND COMMUNALLY?

- Become informed
- Initiate conversations
- Talk to family, friends, colleagues
- invite guest speakers to lead a discussion on the issues outlined in this paper.
- [Download](#) an Australian government map.

timfo.org

Important to remember:

Every nation has the right to sovereign borders.

There is NO BORDER between Australia and Timor-Leste.

The Timorese government has asked Australia to talk and the answer has been 'no'.

The Australian people's national border is incomplete.

The Timor Sea issue is about justice, not charity.

NetAct



A Project of Catholic Social Justice, Welfare and Educational Agencies.

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JUSTICE FOR WEST PAPUA

WE BELIEVE

- Every person is made in the image and likeness of God.
- Every person has the right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture and cruelty.
- Every person has the right to freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention.
- Every adult has the right to engage in decisions affecting their nation, to freedom of opinion and expression, and to receive and impart information and ideas.
- Every person has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- Every person has the right to be educated and to work.
- Every person has the right to express their own culture publicly.

OUR CONCERNS

- The 1969 takeover of Papua by Indonesia was conducted by the military gaining the forced agreement of just 1,022 people.
- The people of the Papuan provinces are denied basic political, social and cultural rights.
- Over a half a million people have been killed since 1969.
- Papuans are discriminated against in employment and education.
- The Papuan provinces experience oppressive levels of military and police oversight.
- Papuans are increasingly becoming outsiders in their own land.
- Political dissent by Papuans is treated as terrorism and is dealt with by the recently raised terrorism unit, Densus 88.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Full membership of Papua in the Melanesian Spearhead Group.
- Intervention by the United Nations by means of free and unfettered fact finding investigations.
- An internationally supervised process of dialogue with Indonesia.
- The establishment of networks of solidarity in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.
- Australian government impartial consideration of evidence of human rights violations by Indonesian security forces.
- Suspension of Australian finance and training for Indonesian military, especially Detachment 88 until Indonesian government violations cease.

Read
["We Will Lose Everything"](#)
Report



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WHAT WE CAN DO INDIVIDUALLY:

Read about West Papua.

Recent Report: <http://bit.ly/209EJRC>

Find supportive websites and follow the news on West Papua e.g. The Australia West Papua Association:
<http://awpasydneynews.blogspot.com.au/>

Free West Papua Campaign
<https://www.freewestpapua.org/>

Pray for the people.

WHAT WE CAN DO COMMUNALLY:

Discuss the situation. What do we know? What don't we know? Why?

What effect does it have on us? What are the implications?

Find out what Australian Companies are present in West Papua. Are they involved in palm oil production? What effect is this having on the Papuan forests? Contact the Companies.

Raise the West Papua issue in the Parish and other groups.

Have a Prayer of the Faithful inserted into the Sunday Liturgy.

Pray for the people.

**God of justice
and love, our
hearts ache as
we think of our
brothers and
sisters in West
Papua.**

**They are
suffering.**

**May our eyes
and ears be
opened so that
we work to
support them in
their quest for
justice, peace,
dignity and
freedom.**

WHAT WE CAN DO POLITICALLY:

Find out about the Melanesian Spearhead Group. What does it do? Why is it important? Which nations belong to it?

Write to the Australian government - local member, Senators, Foreign Minister, Prime Minister questioning our support of a counter-terrorism such as Detachment 88 which is used to manage peaceful political dissent.



WEST PAPUAN FLAG