



VOTING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Federal Election 2022

Your voice strengthens our voice

A Joint Project of Social Justice,
Welfare and Educational Agencies



VOTING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

February 2022

Dear Friends,

As we enter the third year of trying to “live with Covid” many of us approach the impending federal election tired, hurt, and anxious. This election will be perhaps like no other. We are not sure if we can turn up to vote in person, whether the democracy sausage sizzle will meet us when we get there, and more importantly, in time of such tumult, what guides our vote?

As Australians and as Christians, we are challenged to reflect on the values and issues we want our country to consider as we face this particular period in our history.

Voting is a very personal choice, nevertheless we come to it as a community that tries to hold true to Catholic social teaching (CST). So, before the chaos, controversy and drama of the federal election campaign obscures the path ahead, we wanted to offer you a possible source of reflection. Attached you will find a series of documents we hope calls us forward to do three things.

FIRST, we have written a short document on the urgency and imperative of CST. **SECONDLY**, we have included a number of briefing documents on issues that have real relevance to both CST and the state of our nation. If you find them useful, we encourage you to share them with your community, school, friends and family. **FINALLY**, we are asking each of us to think about, talk about, pray about, and finally vote on our values in this coming election.

From the fires of 2019 to the women’s march for justice and the enormous battering we have all taken from Covid-19, the last three years have seen tectonic changes take place in the way we live, work and pray. The way forward remains unclear, and we are suffering historic low levels of trust in many institutions, but especially political parties. That’s why we must find true North by returning to teaching that prioritises the vulnerable, that speaks truth to power, that recognises we are all made in the image and likeness of our God.

We need our values, our call for justice and equity to be heard around the nation during this election campaign. Let’s walk this path together and remember we are all always called to community, to solidarity with the powerless, and to love.

If you believe that it would be helpful, would you kindly distribute this Kit to your communities with an encouragement that it be distributed to parish, social justice and educational groups, discussed in community and social justice gatherings, and shared with friends.

Yours in hope.

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VOTING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

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DAYS OF ACTION VOTING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

A Joint Project of Social Justice, Welfare and Educational Agencies

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constituent dimension of the preaching of the gospel... Christian love of neighbour and justice cannot be separated.

Justice in the World, *Synod of Bishops, 1971*

The good news – and the bad news – is that Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is not an interesting add-on to our faith. It is foundational to the call of the Gospel and to all that we aspire to be. As the federal election approaches, this teaching needs to inform, not only our prayers and our action, but also our vote.

Between the last federal election in 2019 and the upcoming one in 2022 our communities have lived through historic bushfires, floods, and of course, the pandemic. In the bushfires, we lost the lives of several people; billions of animals and birds, and millions of acres; all went up in flames. The pandemic cost the lives of countless people – with the death toll continuing to rise – and resulted in broken lives and economies. These have been very hard years for many of us.

But bushfire – like the pandemic – doesn't just destroy, it also reveals the bones of the country, its contours and its crevices. Likewise, the pandemic has exerted so much pressure on all of us that the fault lines we had papered over in times of plenty are now open wounds in the body politic.

This is a rare and precious moment when the true condition of our democracy and the structures that hold us together as a community, not just a nation, can be seen very clearly. For that reason, we must not waste it.

Inspired by the energy and compassion that was unleashed in the call out for 150 Days of Action for asylum seekers, we will be using this time in the run up to the federal election to put social justice at the heart of our political assessments. The human and Christian dimensions of these issues are often ignored in the ongoing debate and political wrangling. This is of particular concern in the current climate when conviction politics has been replaced by retail politics and every meeting is defined by the transaction, not the relationship.

To counter retail politics, ***Voting for the Common Good*** invites communities to reflect on issues from the perspective of our humanity and our faith, rather than the from standpoint of political rhetoric. We hope that it will engender new conversations.

It is our desire that the Kit will find its way, with your help, into communities across Australia – parishes, schools, community, social justice and other educational groups, and shared with friends. We will work together, within the diversity of our own communities, to sharpen and deepen our understanding of what it means to vote for the common good, so that our vote can be based on this understanding. It could enable us also to engage with MPs, Senators and candidates and ask where they stand on these vital issues.



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Your voice strengthens our voice

THREE STEPS NEEDED TO RE-BUILD OUR DEMOCRACY

Often, politics itself is responsible for the disrepute in which it is held, on account of corruption and the failure to enact sound public policies.” Pope Francis, Laudato Si’, 197

We cannot avoid noting with concern how today, and not only in Europe, we are witnessing [a retreat from democracy](#). Democracy requires participation, and involvement on the part of all. Consequently, it demands hard work and patience. Pope Francis.

STEP ONE in the rebuilding of a healthy and inclusive Australian democracy is removing the scourge of corruption. In 2018, researchers with Griffith University and Transparency International released a [global corruption barometer](#), measuring trust in governments of all levels. Their findings have been confirmed in current results from [Swinburne University](#).

[Those surveyed](#) believe that politicians have become self-serving, with re-election their major goal and focus, and with policies and promises reflecting this. Politicians are not seen to be trustworthy, with resultant declining political, social, and economic well-being.

Almost two-thirds said they had seen or suspected officials of using their position to benefit themselves, and over half saw or suspected officials of making decisions to favour “a business or individual who gave them political donations or support”. Trust in all levels of government is at an all-time low. Corruption is not a victimless crime, redirecting vitally needed public funds from those in need to those who already have plenty. It distorts public policy and always ensures a hand is

tilting the scales of justice in Australia.

That’s why we need a **Federal anti-corruption commission**, with the powers of a Royal Commission. It is why we need to review political donations, one of the most powerful drivers for corrupt practices in this country.

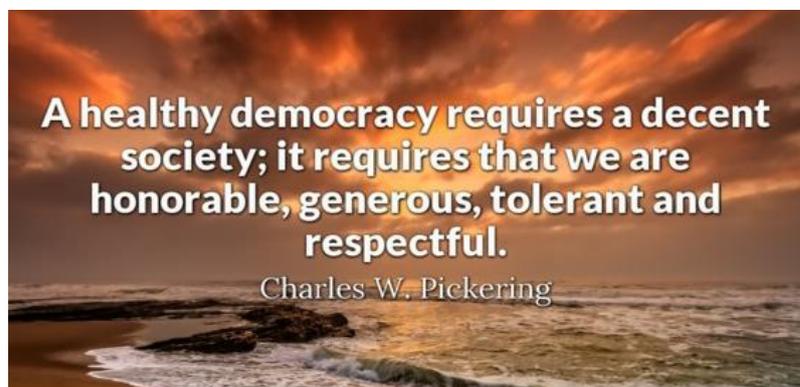
STEP TWO is bringing **transparency back into the services that have replaced the public service**. Over the last thirty years, political parties of both stripes have outsourced and privatised major parts of our former public service.

This puts service providers beyond accountability, with “commercial-in-confidence” being claimed whenever performance is questioned, or Freedom of Information requested.

If the community agrees with the privatisation of what was once held in common, we must have more rigorous tools for transparency and accountability, and we must do away with denying responsibility, as we have seen demonstrated so spectacularly in our detention regime.

STEP THREE is to join the ranks of every other nation in the OECD and institute a **Bill of Human Rights**.

Democracy needs more than just a vote every three or four years. It needs the structure and strength to uphold our desire for equity, accountability, transparency and compassion. Nothing less than a **Bill of Human Rights** can provide that.



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VOTING FOR JUSTICE FOR ALL OF US

AGED CARE, DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Catholic Social Teaching is the foundation of our faith in action, expressing what Jesus taught us about living responsibly and building a just society. Core to this is knowing we can only live full lives in relationship with others, through community, built on the common good, the solidarity of all in our one human family, on our one Earth.

COVID has been a stark reminder of how badly we need to revisit support for our aged. Eldership has been abandoned in modern western life and it is long overdue for all of us to return to actively honouring our elders and giving them central roles in our local communities – no longer leaving them lonely at home or isolated in aged care holding centres. Nothing about them without them.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

Human life is sacred and human dignity is the foundation of our moral vision for society.

All people are equal and deserve to be treated equally across all ages, abilities, diversities and disabilities.

We are all responsible to protect human rights and the dignity of each – especially those who are most vulnerable – those who are aged, disabled and mentally unwell.

How we treat our most vulnerable is a bottom-line test of our quality as a society.



WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Aged, Mental Health and Disability Care have deteriorated over the past twenty years, despite numerous investigations and reports. Private industry rorts, abuses and violence have resulted in families and carers suffering from lack of care.

Individualised “care packages and plans” for those most vulnerable have been limited, both “at home” and in residential institutional settings. There has been no equity in the treatment of individuals, and reform has not occurred despite significant reports.

The Aged Care Royal Commission Report, calling for a new act of parliament, to rebuild both the design and governance of the industry, to make it restorative and preventative, has not led to action.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

To date, the Aged Care Commission Report has not resulted in significant outcomes or planning

Funding models and the demands of an ageing population continue to undermine infrastructures and services. Proposed cuts will impact particularly on smaller institutions.

Evidence shows that **mental illness and substance dependency** frequently co-exist. **Integrated treatment and rehabilitation facilities** remain threatened.

Lack of adequate support for **rural people and their carers** are resulting in lower health outcomes.

Hospital and aged care funding remains inadequate, despite promised increases.

Aged Care, Disability and Mental health are characterised by gaping holes, needing massive investments in co-production and co-design plus co-delivery in the hands-on, day-to-day quality of activities. Until government, consumers & carers contribute as partners, these critical areas will continue to deteriorate. Numerous royal commissions have pointed out the urgency of action over many years, but governments have been missing in action, allowing privatised services to literally get away with huge profits.

Robbie Lloyd

WHAT DO WE WANT?

Legislative Reform – a redesigned Aged Care Act, ensuring protection for individuals of their choice and control rights

Enactment of all recommendations of the Aged Care Royal Commission, with compliance and oversight of processes of all three tiers of government

Administrative Reform of Aged Care Standards & Accreditation agency processes, answerable to local community, elders and carers

Full transparency and accountability, including to local community: staffing, quality, complaints, compliance, and financial outcomes, with indicators for consumer choice

Lifestyle Reform: focus on independence and ongoing active roles for all elders, enabling them to opt in and out of assistance and involvement in community life

A workforce of trained, registered, and qualified, workers across all care settings

Sustainability – with aged care models part of society's active response in caring for Earth with a sustainability program, specific policies, and renewable and efficient energy design requirements

A simplified system with easily understood information and local solutions

Better integration of health and well-being services into aged care

Proper recognition of unpaid carers with the support needed to maintain their wellbeing

A strongly resourced independent regulator, providing supervisory action to protect consumers with wide enforcement and penalties

A core business model, which respects all clients and services and is inclusive, culturally safe and sensitive

A funding model that grows with the population and provides individuals with control over their funds, while ensuring transparency in provider spending and affordability for consumers.

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:
<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/>

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, 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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VOTING FOR THE GOOD OF EARTH

FACING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

We are blessed to have a pope who speaks to all the world about the prudence, justice and empathy required so that more people on our planet might enjoy integral human development. He invites us to live the ecological vocation of justice — in the footsteps of Francis of Assisi — prepared to engage with all comers anxious about the future of the planet and the plight of the poor.

Frank Brennan

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?



All forms of life – plant, animal and human – have intrinsic worth, and are essentially interconnected and interdependent.

The conservation of 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.

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

We are impelled by Catholic Social Teaching to take urgent action on the climate emergency facing creation.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

At Cop26, Australia refused to sign a pledge to cut emissions, refused to improve its 2030 targets, and dismissed calls to phase out coal.

Australia's fossil fuel exports have more than doubled since [2005](#). We are the world's largest exporter of [metallurgical coal](#) and the third largest carbon producing country of [fossil fuels overall](#).

The federal government continues to subsidise fossil fuel companies. It has granted [approvals](#) for new fossil fuel developments that will create millions of tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. This includes [three new coal mines](#) and a new major gas power plant in the [Hunter Valley](#).

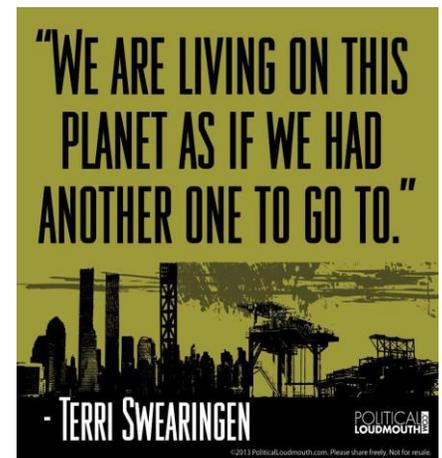
The climate crisis is causing

- water, flood, fire, drought
- damage to the Great Barrier Reef
- mass fish kills and devastation of river systems

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Australia is now ranked at 60th out of 60 countries worldwide on the [Climate Change Performance Index](#), (CCPI). The Australian government scored a zero (the only country to do so) for its policy response at Cop26.

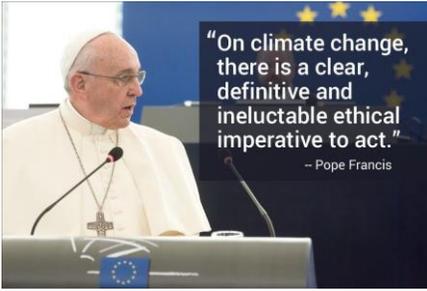
Australia [has promoted gas, carbon capture and storage and hydrogen](#) as solutions.



Support for fossil fuels results in:

- over-consumption of energy
- extreme weather events
- misuse of government funding
- displacement of populations
- decreased water security
- tropical diseases





WHAT DO WE WANT?

1. A **commitment** by Government to introduce the **necessary regulation and spending** to keep warming to the **1.5 degrees** stipulated by the [IPCC's sixth assessment report](#)
2. A **moratorium** on new fossil fuel developments, and a strategic focus on wind and solar technology
3. Economic Policies to maximise zero emissions technology to achieve at least **50% reduction by 2030**
4. Policies which are guaranteed to include the **three essential prongs for ongoing progress**:
 - **TECHNOLOGY,**
 - **FINANCIAL SUPPORT,**
 - **GOVERNMENT ACTION**
5. **Bipartisan, National Cabinet, and business collaboration** to develop appropriate strategies and structures to facilitate the development to renewable, cost-effective energy, which are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable
6. **Financial support and training, employment opportunities in renewable industries and clear transition strategies** for those workers, families and areas facing devastation when the coal industry is closed down

7. An **independent national Environmental Protection Authority** to promote regulation, better science and data collection, and a more strategic, transparent approach to environmental issues

8. **Integration of legislation** which ensures strategic planning development outcomes that are just and sustainable.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Climate Institute:

www.climateinstitute.org.au

Catholic Earthcare Australia:

www.catholicearthcareoz.net

Australian Conservation Foundation:

www.acf.org.au

OzGreen:

www.ozgreen.org

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

“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

Voting for the Common Good



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VOTING FOR THE GOOD OF ALL

ACKNOWLEDGING AND LISTENING TO FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Catholic Social Teaching is the foundation of our faith in action, expressing what Jesus taught us about living responsibly and building a just society. Core to this is knowing we can only live full lives in relationship with others, through community, built on the common good. Solidarity for the good of all in our one human family, on our one Earth, here for all to enjoy and protect, is what makes us human.

None of us can enjoy our inheritance of being truly Australian until we honour and celebrate First Peoples' cultures, roles and history, as they lead the way we can all be together in this land, absorbing its ancient wisdom and rhythms. Putting things right will allow all of us to grow, as full citizens of our unique country, learning from the people who have been here since human time began.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

All people are equal and deserve to be treated equally as a basic human right. This is specifically true for our First Peoples, who are the original and continuing custodians of this land. Acknowledging the history, roles and responsibilities of First Peoples is essential.

Human life is sacred and human dignity is the foundation of our moral vision. After 250 years of colonial presence, it is time to make amends and balance the slate.

We are all responsible to protect human rights, to allow one another to live with human decency, and to look after those who are most vulnerable.

First Peoples have offered the Uluru Statement from the Heart as a gesture of partnership in advancing a healing process. We believe it will begin only when we embrace the Statement and begin Treaty negotiations.

The Federal Government has the responsibility to enact Constitutional Reform to make First Peoples a core feature of what makes us Australian. Only then can First Nations take their proper place in this land.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Past and present mistreatment of First People's rights, which continue today in the name of welfare support, ongoing high incarceration rates, stolen generations, deaths in custody, youth arrests, alienation from homelands and gaps in health, education and housing, are [well-documented](#).

[The Uluru Statement from the Heart](#) has been rejected by the Coalition Government without consultation or respect. The Labor Party has stated that it will honour the call to move the Statement forward.

The denial of a Voice to Parliament is a rejection of the core acknowledgement of First Peoples' role in our national story, and their right to inform all aspects of government on matters relating to their lives.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

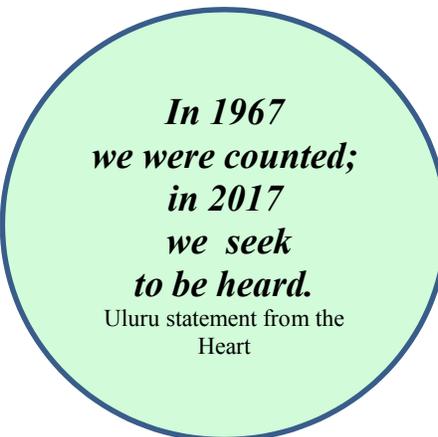
Ignoring our penal colonial history and current practices has weakened our national psyche.

Generations of hurt stolen wages, stolen children, stolen land, racist policies and practices have driven a wedge between us.

Non-indigenous denial of our history of colonial and penal practices, many of them continuing today, has served to weaken our moral fibre.

Imbalance in media reporting helps to exacerbate underlying racism, (including institutionalised racism), which still exists in our nation.

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.



WHAT DO WE WANT?

A national conversation to embrace First Peoples as they lead the way to listening, truth telling and healing

A constitutionally enshrined Voice to the Parliament of Australia to enable the voices of First Nations Peoples to be heard, so that they can achieve **self-determination** over decisions that touch their lives, culture and communities

Completion of the Uluru Statement process, with ongoing changes to advance the Voice to Parliament, Treaty, and Reconciliation across Australian parliaments, institutions, businesses and societies

Enactment of recommendations of the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and Stolen Generations Royal Commissions (RC), as well other official reports from across the nation that have led to minimal or zero reform (e.g., the Don Dale Youth Detention RC in NT)

Review and Reform of justice and social service regulations, policies, and procedures at all levels of government, and in all institutions (police, corrections, juvenile justice, schools, childcare, aged care, housing, health) to ensure equal & equitable support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples

Reform of Funding and administrative decisions so that decisions are made by oversight committees predominantly consisting of First Nations Peoples, and always including local representatives from the communities affected

Inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages, and heritage so we can all learn to live with respect for each other and relate to the Spirit of Place in the country that nourishes us.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.referendumcouncil.org.au/sites/default/files/2017-05/Uluru_Statement_From_The_Heart_0.PDF

Justreinvest.org.au

www.hreoc.gov.au

www.antar.org.au

www.oxfam.org.au

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/>

www.erc.org.au



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*We have our heroes.
Albert Namatjira painted the
soul of this nation.
Vincent Lingiari
put out his 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

AT THE SERVICE OF GREATER JUSTICE

OPPOSING THE ACCELERATING WEALTH GAP

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

Just allocation of resources ensures that the benefits and burdens of society's institutions are distributed in ways that are fair and equitable.

Distributive justice recognises that different members of society have varying abilities to contribute.

The Federal Government plays an important role in maintaining social cohesion and guaranteeing equity in the community that leads to the flourishing of all.

The Government plays a direct role in redistributing the wealth in society towards those in greatest need.

Effective economic policy encourages socially and environmentally responsible outcomes. It encourages balanced and sustainable growth – to maintain living standards, support vital social services, and increase the standards of those less well off. It collects sufficient revenue to allow the Government to maintain funding commitments and expand commitments where necessary.

Inequality is a political choice: it is not inevitable.



"Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons."

Pope Francis,
June 7, 2013

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The latest [wages growth figures](#) showed private sector wages grew at 2.4%, well below the RBA's target of around 3.5%. The annual growth of public sector wages of just 1.3% is the lowest ever recorded.

Meanwhile, [Australia's billionaires became 50% richer](#) during the pandemic, prompting concerns that the pandemic-triggered recession has "turbocharged" the gap between rich and poor.

In Australia, the [average wealth](#) of the top 20 per cent (\$3,255,000) is some **90 times that** of the lowest 20 per cent (\$36,000).

[116,427 homeless people](#) remain on the streets each night, and more than 161,000 Australians are on the queue for social housing.

[The JobKeeper wage subsidy scheme](#) saw at least \$4.6 billion go to businesses whose profits went up during the Covid-19 lockdowns. Corporations did not have to repay subsidies, while those on Centrelink payments [will be asked to return overpayments they may have received](#).

[JobSeeker has not increased](#) in real terms since 1994 despite the vastly increased cost of living.

Universities were denied JobKeeper, and fees for tertiary humanities subjects were increased.

We are entering the 10th year of [real wage stagnation in Australia](#).

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

[Public policy in the areas of social security, taxation, housing, and employment](#) is playing a significant role in determining the rate of poverty and inequality in Australia.

2020 marked the [steepest increase in global billionaires' share of wealth on record](#), as the pandemic accelerated inequality.

The effects of accelerating inequality are real and corrosive, reinforced by a range of deliberating engineered economic policies.

Government policies continue to impoverish those who are poor, resulting in record numbers (including one in six children) living in poverty in one of the wealthiest nations on the planet.

The impact of poverty in Australia is largely borne by people on social security payments, those who rent, single parents, people who can't find enough work to make ends meet.

Increasing tax breaks for those who are wealthy means that less is available for education, health, community support and the environment.

Current government policies equate the common good with the interests of affluent investors, and the business community.

Thousands of people who lost paid work during the pandemic are at risk of becoming unemployed long-term, due to under-investment in employment assistance.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

1. [Reinstatement of the pandemic leave disaster payment](#) to \$750 a week (up from \$450) and an increase the base rate of working age payments from \$44 to \$67 a day
2. **An independent body** to advise on the equity of the income support system and rates of pay and pensions
3. **Entry-level jobs that are secure and properly paid**, with curbs on the exploitation of workers on temporary visas, and others in poorly regulated sectors on the labour market
4. **An increase of supplements for JobSeeker recipients** (for rent, disability, and caring for children allowance)
5. **A flexible jobs and training guarantee** for all long-term unemployed people, including paid work experience and training, based on individual needs
6. **SRSS and special benefits payments** for full-time students on **temporary/bridging visas**
7. **Equitable reform of the tax system**
8. Urgent investment to **public, community, and social housing**
9. Commitment to the **removal of wasteful resources** on subsidies and tax breaks for polluting industries
10. Resolute action on **corporate tax avoidance**
11. **Reform of negative gearing** and upper-class welfare
12. **Commitment to a fair balance between economic and health interests**
13. **Strengthening of support for regulatory agencies and statutory bodies to ensure the enforcement of just legislation.**



The credibility test for political parties – and the central question around fiscal policy – Is no longer about economic growth, BUT GROWTH FOR WHOM.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

UNSW Sydney

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

ACOSS:

www.acoss.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society:

www.vinnies.org.au

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/>

I feel as if I'm constantly asking myself this question: 'Did something change in this country?' Did something change, that the standard for behaviour now is not 'I have to do the right thing' or 'I have to do what I promised I said I would do', but instead 'how much can I get away with?'

Leigh Sales 2021

A Joint Project of Catholic Social Justice, Welfare and Educational groups

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VOTING FOR A FAIR HOUSING DEAL

HOUSING FOR ALL

Catholic Social Teaching is the foundation of our faith in action, expressing what Jesus taught us about living responsibly and building a just society. Core to this is knowing we can only live full lives in relationship with others, through community, built on the Common Good. Solidarity to the Good of All in our one Human Family, on our One Earth, there for all to enjoy and protect, is what makes us human.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

All people are equal and deserve to be treated equally as a basic human right, this should include having access to safe and affordable housing (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights, No.25*).

Human life is sacred and human dignity is the foundation of our moral vision for society. Without a home no one can live in dignity.

We are all responsible to protect human rights, to allow one another to live with human decency, and to look after our most vulnerable as a given. This includes making public provision for housing for those who can't afford private housing.

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.

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.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Market forces in Australia, driven by the “*own your own home*” dream, plus policies like negative gearing favouring existing property holders, and the entry of foreign investors into the domestic housing market, **have made housing unaffordable for generations of young people.** Politicians have watched all this as if “*it's out of our hands.*”

Doing nothing to invest public funds in strategic policy interventions to prevent social degradation, worshipping the free **market model of neoliberalism has made things worse.** Abandoning the safety net in housing is a recipe for a divided society.

In the gig economy, on-line private room rentals like AirBnB have driven up rents for all.

Historically, Australia has done a fine job supporting public housing as a government tool to support the common good (as Hugh Stretton championed in South Australia). But **the idea of social housing has been smeared as a welfare state mentality**, rather than an investment in the good of all, including the building industry and all the jobs arising from this.

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.

Our **society** has become **divided into haves and have nots**, with low wages widening the gap between, and eroding, the middle class. Australia used to be a much more balanced socio-economic whole, but now the numbers of those in poverty growing, despite claims that the economy is picking up. Many working people are unable to afford high rents.

Neither major party has made any significant announcement about investing in social housing, as if they are afraid of being labelled “socialists,” while the “Can Do Capitalist” federal government pumps billions of public money into tax breaks for corporations and climate wrecking fossil fuel businesses. Despair among younger generations has added to risk-taking behaviours and self-harm.



WHAT DO WE WANT?

1. A **mandatory percentage of national GDP allocated to social and affordable housing** in every Federal and State Budget
2. **Law Reform** at all three levels of government **to facilitate innovative social and affordable housing**, including multiple occupancy models protected by strata title type buy-in/buy-out provisions
3. **Aged Care industry reform to remove current profit-gouging by providers** when older residents die (bequeathing families with a pittance from having invested the bulk of their would-be estates in aged care accommodation), leaving the next generation barren of help from their loved ones
4. **Mandatory Laws** requiring Developers **to allocate 10% of new housing to social and affordable housing**, including provision for adequate natural and recreational space, and protection of native vegetation (which prevents destructive land-clearing practices)
5. **Mandatory renewable and sustainable installations** in all new social and affordable housing developments
6. **Local Community Involvement** in design, development and ongoing management and sustainability of social and affordable housing zones
7. **Mandatory provisions to prevent developers from having roles** in all three tiers of government **in decisions about housing**; and a **Federal ICAC** to supervise corruption in this sector as in others

8. Legislation to guarantee adequate protection for both tenants and landlords.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ACOSS:

<https://www.acoss.org.au/policy-priorities-for-the-next-govt-housing-homelessness/>

Churches Community Housing:

www.churcheshousing.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society:

www.vinnies.org.au

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

<https://socialjustice.catholic.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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VOTING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

JUSTICE FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

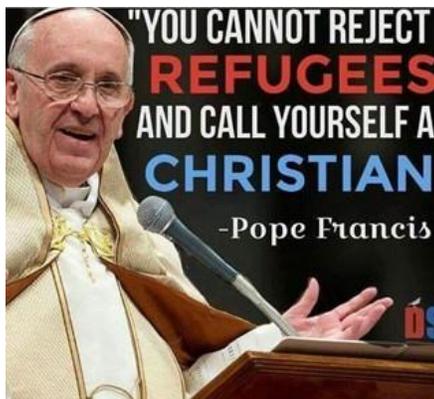
Everyone in Australia should be worried about justice and a sense of fair play. If politicians are allowed to erode the parameters of justice and human rights for refugees or other under-privileged groups, then it won't be long before these standards will be applied for all citizens. Remember – bad things happen when good people do nothing. (Ian Chappell)

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

The Australian Government has obligations under international treaties to ensure that the [human rights of asylum seekers](#) and refugees are respected and protected, regardless of how or where they arrive, and whether they arrive with or without a visa

The government has responsibility to ensure that refugees are not sent back to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened.

The rights of asylum seekers and refugees include the right not to be arbitrarily detained.



Based on the Government's own data, Kaldor Centre scholars have demonstrated that offshore processing is "cruel, costly and ineffective"

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The [Government continues to detain people arbitrarily](#) and indefinitely in **onshore and offshore** detention centres for months and years, where they are exposed to cruel, inhuman and degrading conditions, without hope or future. The situation in the Park Hotel has become symbolic of [unconscionable injustice](#).

Nearly 300 Australian citizens or permanent residents remain in [Afghanistan](#) with more than 100,000 Afghan nationals seeking humanitarian visas from Australia.

[Temporary protection visas](#) remain in place, with government funded legal service being removed and family reunions prohibited.

The re-assessment of [Status Resolution Support Services](#) (SRSS) has led to cuts in financial assistance and loss of accommodation for thousands of refugees.

Supervision of detention centres has been [outsourced to private companies](#)

Covid19 has exacerbated the situation, with [asylum seekers onshore confined in crowded centres](#) that do not allow for physical distancing or other necessary precautions.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

The Australian government has [not granted a single humanitarian visa](#) out of the initial 3,000 promised to Afghans, and those granted emergency three-month temporary visas, but unable to flee, will not be offered an extension.

Within Australia, the Government is subjecting asylum seekers and refugees to [long periods of processing](#), exposing them to suspension, insecurity, and poverty.

The cost to Australian taxpayers to hold a single refugee on [Nauru](#) has escalated tenfold, to more than \$15,000 a day per person. At the same time as the government refuses to reveal where nearly \$400m spent on offshore processing has gone.

The withdrawal of support is placing intolerable pressure on charities, already struggling to support the increasing number of poverty-stricken people in Australian society.

Long delays are creating severe anxiety, anguish, and financial hardship for those seeking protection.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

WE SEEK CANDIDATES WHO WILL LOBBY FOR A CLEAR SHIFT IN AUSTRALIA'S REFUGEE POLICY:

1. To increase the intake of **Afghan refugees**, including the families of people already here
2. To provide **Income support** and a **financial safety net** for refugees, and **reinstate government-funded legal assistance**
3. To **end temporary protection visas**, and provide a clear pathway to **permanent residency**
4. To afford access to **family reunions for all refugees and people seeking asylum**
5. To **expedite the processing** of citizenship applications as a matter of urgency
6. To **amend legislation** to ensure **regular transparent review** of detention to protect human rights and to prevent situations of indefinite detention
7. To **increase the refugee resettlement program** to an annual intake of 30,000 places, over the next 4 years
8. To **increase negotiations with other countries** towards an agreed **regional solution**, which recognises Australia's rights, obligations, and responsibilities
9. To **peel back the extra discretionary powers** that allow the immigration minister to cancel visas, detain or re-detain asylum seekers without warning, send them to offshore detention and prevent reviews of visa decisions without proper procedures
10. To bring all people held offshore to Australia and permanently re-settle them here or in another safe country.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Australian Human Rights Commission

www.humanrights.gov.au/

Refugee Council of Australia

www.refugeecouncil.org.au/

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council:

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/>

ACOSS:

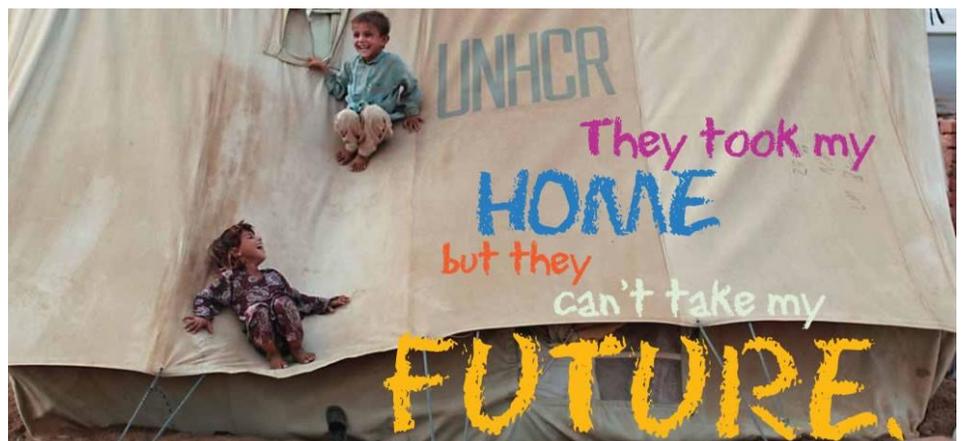
www.acoss.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society:

www.vinnies.org.au#

"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



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A FAIR TRIAL

THE RIGHT OF BERNARD COLLAERY

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

There are minimum standards for a fair trial.

All people should be equal before the courts.

A defendant is entitled to be informed promptly of the charges and the evidence to be used against him or her.

A defendant is entitled to be given access to the detailed evidence and background to the charges.

The defendant is entitled to be tried 'without undue delay'.

Trials should be public except where there are clearly recognised matters of national security at risk.



Bernard Collaery

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The Australian government spied on Timor-Leste in 2004 during Treaty negotiations concerning resources of the Timor Sea, an illegal and fraudulent act.

When the spy now known as "Witness K" saw that officials who ordered the spying were lobbying for Woodside, the oil company set to gain most from the deal, he complained to his superiors and was advised to get a lawyer. He chose Bernard Collaery.

When the Timorese government was advised of the spying, they withdrew from the Treaty and began negotiations for the 2018 border.

Two months after the border was finalised, Witness K and Collaery were charged with making known state secrets. Witness K pleaded guilty in 2021 and received a short suspended sentence.

Three years and over 60 often delayed or secretive hearings passed without a trial date being set.

The prosecution is secretive, too costly, too lengthy, unfair, and not in the public interest.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

The right to a fair and open trial is being denied to Bernard Collaery.

Australians are denied the right to observe the trial and their faith in the rule of law is undermined.

National Security legislation – designed to combat terrorism – is being used to cover-up Australia's economic espionage against Timor-Leste.

The actions of those who ordered the spying are concealed while those who told the truth are depicted as criminals.

This prosecution could establish precedents which may constrain future truth-tellers.

The prosecution signals to the intelligence community that reporting government wrong-doing threatens their reputation and livelihood.

The prosecution exposes Australia to international condemnation. It erodes the Australian image as a fair, law-abiding, honest and non-corruptible regional power.

The episode has weakened the Australian relationship with the strategically placed Timor-Leste.

“Australia’s bugging of Timor-Leste’s Cabinet rooms and subsequent hounding of Bernard Collaery and a former intelligence officer was a display of mendacity, duplicity, fraud, criminal trespass and contempt of international law.”

Stephen Charles AO QC

“If the material is so significant a danger to national security if disclosed, then the result should be that the proceedings are abandoned.”

Anthony Whealy QC

WHAT DO WE WANT?

A fair and open trial of Bernard Collaery before a jury as soon as possible;

A fair and open investigation at the highest level into the espionage against Timor-Leste in 2004;

An explanation of how the prosecution is in the public interest.

Proper parliamentary oversight of the operations of the intelligence services;

Complete review of the historical relationship between Australia and Timor-Leste;

Australian financial compensation to the Timor-Leste government for legal and other costs incurred during litigation concerning the Timor Sea espionage.



Canberra demonstration at the first Magistrate's hearing on 12 September 2018



Bernard Collaery speaking at demonstration for the 61st hearing on 16 December 2021

For more information:

www.justly.info

<https://twitter.com/TSJForum>

<https://www.facebook.com/TSJForum/>



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Government
"lies,
fraud,
duplicity,
secrecy,
criminal trespass,
contempt of
international law."

SELLING DEATH

Australia the Arms Merchant

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

Violence produces violence.

Weapons are designed to maim and kill people.

War arises from rivalry, fear, grievance, greed, revenge, ideology, lack of resources, expansionism....

Education, righting past wrongs, diplomacy, fair trade, working with others to address common problems such as disease and climate change are more potent for peace than threats and increased arms.

Modern weapons kill more people more efficiently than in times past, making it difficult to maintain proportion in conflict situations.

It is unethical for Australians to claim that national defence and economic growth requires selling weapons overseas.

No number of extra jobs can excuse the threats to civilians posed by more weapons.

READ: [How the military-industrial complex has captured Australia's top strategic advisory body](#)

"It's an absurd contradiction to speak of peace, to negotiate peace, and at the same time, to promote or allow the arms trade".

[Pope Francis](#)

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

More weapons cause more deaths

In 2021 [Australia spent \\$44.62 billion](#) on Defence and the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), up from \$38.7 billion the year before.

Less aid causes greater poverty and declining influence

Australian [overseas aid](#) will total an estimated \$4.335 billion in 2021–22, a [decrease](#) of \$144 million from 2020-2021.

Australia spent [10 times more](#) on defence in 2020-2021 than on foreign aid.

Australia generally [conceals the identity](#) of nations that buy its military products. It is known that [Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zimbabwe](#) are customers.

The Australian government is aiming to be among the [top ten arms exporters](#) in the world.

Australia is thus weakening its international influence in the cause of peacebuilding.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

The escalation of arms manufacture and export [increases the life of conflicts](#).

Australian arms profiteering grows with current increasing arms exports, [including to countries accused of war crimes](#).

Australians are complicit in world conflicts.

"In July last year, prime minister Scott Morrison [spoke of a post-pandemic world that would be 'poorer, more dangerous and more disorderly.'](#) For the arms industry, and its facilitators in government, Morrison's comments may have sounded more like a business opportunity than a grim warning." ([Overland.](#))

A growing arms industry will pressure Australian governments to stay silent on human rights abuses carried out by customer governments.

There is no evidence of any Australian capacity to prevent on-selling of weaponry to terrorist or other groups.



Uganda buys Australian weapons and uses child soldiers.

WHAT DO WE WANTinstead of **SELLING DEATH ?**

The Australian Government must:

Provide data immediately on the [nations that buy Australian weapons](#).

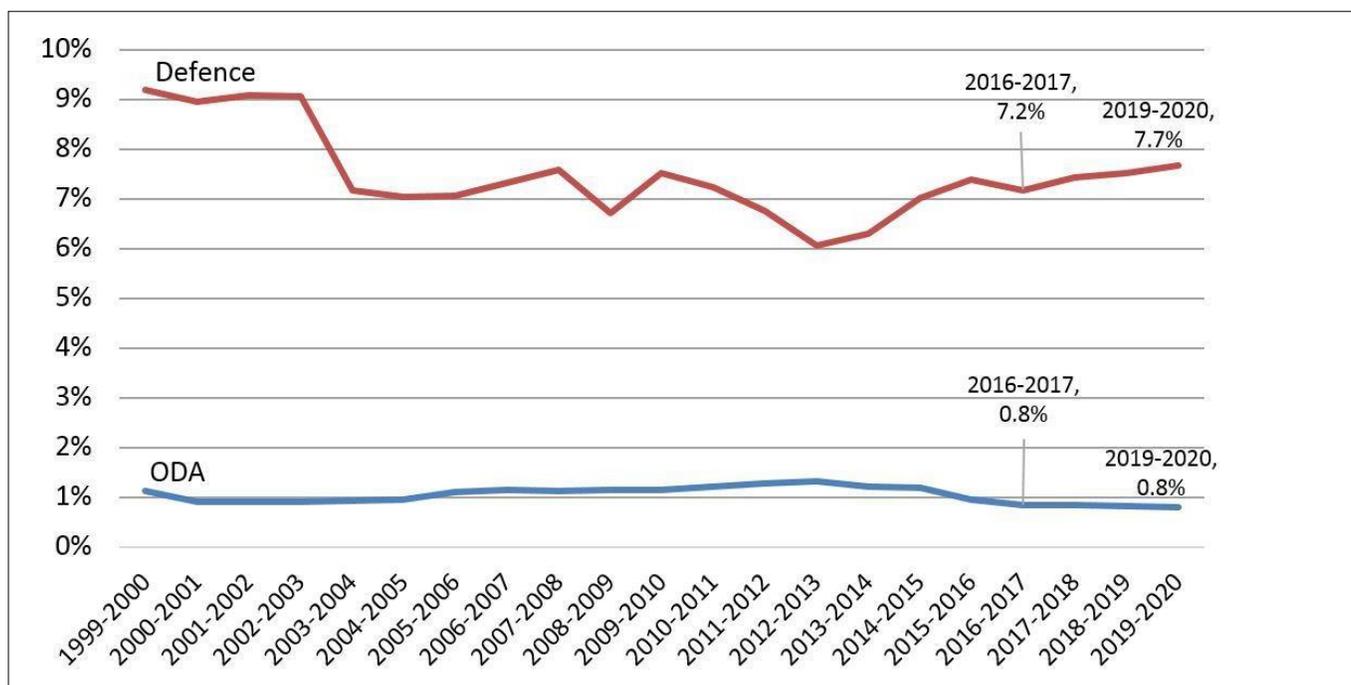
Limit the arms industry to the manufacture of weapons necessary for the protection of Australians from external attack in Australia.

Increase Overseas Development Aid.



Replace pursuit of economic growth through arms manufacture by:

- investment in water and food security, and the renewables industry
- creation of new high-tech industries
- generous support of regional neighbours through education, agriculture, nation-building, cultural preservation and addressing climate change.



For more information:

[The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network \(IPAN\)](#)

[Declassified Australia](#)

[Centre for Public Integrity](#)

[Defence compared with Overseas Development Aid \(ODA\)](#)

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WEST PAPUA

OPPRESSED PEOPLE, FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

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 express their own culture publicly.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The [1969 takeover by Indonesia](#) of Papua was conducted by the military, forcing 1,022 people to agree to a statement at gunpoint.

After [60 years of Indonesian rule](#) the Papuan people are subject to brutality, excluded from decision-making, sidelined economically and educationally, displaced and ridiculed.

There is constant [military and police harassment, intimidation and killing](#).

[Foreign journalists](#) do not have free access to the Papuan provinces, [international aid agencies](#) are scrutinised, restricted and hampered, and [domestic journalists are intimidated](#).

[Human rights violations are escalating](#), including manipulation of public opinion, cybertorture and information control.

[Constant calls by Christian Churches](#) for ceasefires, dialogue, and visits from UN investigators and humanitarian bodies are ignored.

[Australia continues to fund and train Densus 88, a detachment of anti-terrorism troops](#).

[Australia ignores Papuan rights](#) in favour of Indonesian "territorial integrity".

People are arrested and jailed for openly supporting acts of dissent, e.g. [raising the Papuan flag](#).

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Over a [half a million Papuan people](#) have died violently since 1969.

The Papuan population [continues to decrease](#), with Indonesian migrants now the dominant political and economic power.

[Political dissent](#) by Papuans is treated as terrorism.

Papuans are discriminated against in employment and education. They are treated as [second-class citizens](#) and are denied basic political, social and cultural rights.

The huge and very obvious Indonesian military presence has [increased by 21,000](#) in the last three years.

There is [gross, excessive use of force](#) against people when they try to exercise their right to free assembly.

Soldiers (not always in uniform) are often [placed in schools](#) and health services increasing people's fear and distrust.

There is increasing and [widespread displacement](#) of people (60,000 by December 2021) evading violence.

WHAT IS NEEDED?

Intervention by the United Nations through unfettered visits by Special Rapporteurs to report on human rights abuses;

An internationally supervised process of dialogue with Indonesia, including a properly supervised referendum in the Papuan provinces;

The establishment of stronger networks of [solidarity](#) in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific;

An impartial consideration by the Australian government of evidence of [human rights violations](#) by Indonesian security forces;

Independent audit of [Australian finance and training of Indonesian police and military](#), especially Detachment 88, Brimob and Kopassus.

Access to West Papua by outside journalists, so that proper reporting of the situation can take place;

The release of [Victor Yeimo](#) and other jailed activists.

MORAL CALL FROM THE WEST PAPUAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. (Matt. 4:16)





1969 Papua
 "United Nations: don't sell us like animals"



s



2022 Papua
 Heavy presence of Brimob, police who work with the Indonesian military and go into schools.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

International Coalition for Papua
<https://humanrightspapua.org/>

Campaign Groups <https://www.freewestpapua.org/info/papua-campaign-groups/>

The Guardian/World
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/west-papua>

West Papua Action Team
<https://www.facebook.com/wpsgbrisbane/>

VERONICA KOMAN

Veronica Koman is an Indonesian lawyer who advocates extensively for human rights in West Papua.

She is a member of International Lawyers for West Papua, an international network of lawyers working to strengthen the human rights of the people of West Papua.

Veronica has been disseminating information about developments in the Papuan situation on social media and has functioned as a key source of information to the outside world.

She recently joined Amnesty International Australia and will act as the liaison person for Amnesty International and state officials, politicians and ambassadors in Australia on matters related to domestic and international human rights issues. Veronica will continue to advocate for the Papuan people.

In November 2021 an attack was made against her parents' home in Jakarta. It appears that other intimidation of her parents and other relatives has occurred. In October, two unidentified men dropped off a package in front of their house, which burst into flames.

Veronica lives in Australia. In 2019, UN human rights experts issued a statement calling on the Indonesian government to protect her rights and those of other other activists. [@VeronicaKoman](https://twitter.com/VeronicaKoman)



"Papuan were bashed up and thrown in the back of Indonesian army trucks for daring to say they wanted independence".

Hugh Lunn, present at the so-called "Act of Free Choice" in 1969

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"There is an urgent need for a platform for meaningful and inclusive dialogue with the people of Papua and West Papua, to address longstanding economic, social and political grievances. There is also a clear need to ensure accountability for past and recent human rights violations and abuses." UN 2020

AT THE SERVICE OF GREATER JUSTICE

VOTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

We are all created equal, women and men. It is important to remember the only people that changed the mind of Jesus throughout his ministry were women: his mum, his friends, the women fighting for the children.

Being created equal means giving women the same rights, responsibilities and value as men.

Inequality is a political choice: it is not inevitable.

The United Nations Women's Association of Australia notes that "vesting women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth."

The benefits that come with treating women with dignity and respect, as understood by Catholic Social Teaching (CST), advances the whole world.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Violence and coercive control of women and girls are costing lives and mental wellbeing. The report, [Debt, duress and dob-ins: Centrelink compliance processes and domestic violence](#), highlights the increased impact of Covid-19 on women experiencing domestic violence.

[Wage inequality](#) continues via labour market segregation and women's partial exclusion from higher-paying, male-dominated fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

In Australia, a woman is murdered every week by a current or former partner.

Discrimination is exacerbated by the damaging university fee [overhaul for the liberal arts](#). Women account for 2/3 of the students' courses facing the biggest increase in fees, underlining the Coalition's pursuit of a gendered ideological campaign.

Disappointingly, the government has committed to only \$200,000 stimuli for working women's centres.

The 2021-22 Statement identified A\$3.4 billion in expenditures on women and gender equity –less than 1% of the entire budget.

Domestic abuse is not being impartially and justly covered in the Australian media and is frequently presented as an isolated incident rather than a systemic issue.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Structural inequalities, which are creating adverse flow-on effects are by far the most significant issue for women right now. Addressing women's rights in isolation has failed to identify coherently the interconnected gender inequalities running rampant across all government sectors.

The fastest group of homeless people in Australia comprises women over the age of 50.

Women from other cultures are often forced to stay with violent partners because of fear of being deported if they report the crime to police.

Women's refuges throughout Australia and rural Australia have been defunded, or funded to fail, over the last ten years, leaving women and children vulnerable and at serious risk of harm.

Men, particularly those on higher incomes, disproportionately benefit from current infrastructure expenditure schemes.

Domestic violence is one of the main drivers of homelessness among women and children, heightened in minority groups such as Aboriginal communities.

Poor media coverage, in its framing of violence against women, not only distorts the seriousness of the problem but detracts from the urgency of the solution for the general population.



Gender equality must become a lived reality.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

1. **Reinstatement of genuine gender-responsive budgeting** that allows for major policy modification across all government departments and ensures that spending proposals only advance if they are accompanied by well-defined gender implications statements
2. **A clear whole-of-government approach** to economic inequality, and workplace harassment
3. **Explicit and unequivocal legislation** to address the cancer of domestic violence and its consequences
4. **Realistic funding for frontline services** such as women's refuges and long-term housing for at-risk families
5. **Radical overhaul of tertiary funding** to facilitate access to TAFE and university for all students
6. **Social and public housing for mature women** experiencing homelessness
7. **Better legal protections** to increase women's formal rights to keep them safe and able to lead productive, fulfilling lives
8. **A national education campaign** to highlight the causes and devastation of domestic violence, and processes for intervention
9. **A media campaign** to address the complex issues related to violence against women
10. **Appropriate portrayal by Media conglomerates of abuse issues** to provide more context and balanced reporting on the systemic nature of domestic violence and the role of male violence against women.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

UNSW Sydney
<https://www.unsw.edu.au/>

ACOSS:
www.acoss.org.au

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



*I am woman, hear me roar
In numbers
too big to ignore
And I know too much to go
back and pretend*

*Oh yes I am wise
But it's wisdom
born of pain
Yes, I've paid the price
But look
how much I gained
If I have to,
I can do anything.*

*I am strong (strong)
I am invincible (invincible)
I am woman*

*You can bend
but never break me
because it only serves to
make me
More determined
to achieve my final goal
And I come back
even stronger
Not a novice any longer
because you've deepened
the conviction in my soul*

Helen Reddy, 1972

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AT THE SERVICE OF THE COMMON GOOD

JUSTICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) impels us as members of Australian society to protect the sanctity of human life and dignity across all generations, including young people, and particularly those who are most vulnerable. Young people represent the future demographic of the Church and wider Australia and bear the heavy burden of creating and leading the imagined, just future society. Hence, our urgent call to solidarity with young people has never been more important. If we truly believe each person is sacred and possess inalienable worth, our social welfare policy must reflect this.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's states that "...the youth should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity."

Young people should be equipped with the democratic, social, and financial tools necessary to tackle and navigate the turbulence of life's challenges.

We believe that the time for action has arrived. Policy and legislation now possess the ability to either cultivate adversity or promote justice. Such political tools must be utilised righteously to champion the young voice and its needs. The Australian Government must protect "the now" to guarantee "a later" for young Australians.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

[CLIMATE] Lack of urgency & action

- The Coalition resists action on climate change, acting as a blatant lobbyist for the profiteering coal industry (as seen in the recent \$15.4m subsidisation into the fossil fuel "growth centre").

[EDUCATION] Hike in university fees and cuts in funding –

- Tuition fees rank as some of the highest in the global arena
- Funding for higher education will decrease by 9.3% in real terms from 2021-22 to 2024-25"
- Fees for humanities subjects will rise by 113% as a part of a market-induced STEM policy.
- Universities were denied JobKeeper.

[EMPLOYMENT & HOUSING]

- 2/3 of young people are unemployed or under-employed, Covid has disrupted job opportunities, with many youth employed in areas vulnerable to automation, and to volatile labour market shifts, shorter and irregular working hours.
- Since 2004, household wealth for the under 35s has scarcely changed, while the wealth of older households has increased by more than 50%, due to the property boom, rise in superannuation assets, and major tax concessions.
- Rental vacancy rates in some regions fell below 1%, with significant rental increases across the country.
- Rentals are also being converted into Airbnb listings, adding to scarce availability, price inflation, and precarious accommodation options.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Carbon levels are the highest they have been since at least 800,000 years ago, threatening the habitability of Earth.

Climate change has clear consequences for youth rights – to development, survival, equality, health and quality of life.

Long-term youth unemployment, the gig economy, stagnant wages, insecure jobs, cuts to penalty rates and casualisation have crippled possibilities for young workers.

Paternalistic deterrents in higher education have seen cuts to the liberal arts, pushing students into debt, undermining individual rights **Budget cuts** have impacted the quality of higher education curricula and staffing.

Rising property prices have put home ownership out of the reach of most young people (aggravated by the looming pressures of stagnant wages, precarious casual contracts, and crippling student debt).

The volatile, competitive housing market has forced young renters to deprioritise spending on food, education, and healthcare in order to keep up with rental payments.

The demographic pressure of an ageing population means there are fewer working-age people to subsidise the tax pool to fund future necessary aged care and pensioner health budgetary projects.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

A Human Rights Act, as well as a Commissioner for Young People, to protect and enforce the rights of young people (cf, the UK Human Rights Act embedded in their legislative system)

Complementary checks and balances to ensure formal accountability for policy and inequitable bills:

- clear protection of human rights in the Australian Constitution
- Legislation to deal with youth human rights violations
- A national Human Rights Action plan, focusing on young people

A clear shift in climate policy

- To ensure for young people a legislated and politicised duty of care on climate, which goes beyond carbon emission mitigation and promises innovative and sustainable energy adaption strategies

Restructuring of education policy

- To restore funding to the humanities to eradicate course bias and ease the doubled HECS debts of affected students
- To prioritise higher education funding for curriculum and research to improve student outcomes, ultimately improving the face of Australia's future workforce and infrastructure

Serious tax reform that not only prioritises production, savings, and investment, but values equitable market competition and positive business imperatives which boost labour creation and security

Government commitment to public, community, and social housing, aided by budgetary policies to facilitate high density living in city suburbs and the possibility of home ownership for young Australians

A review of the age-based tax incentives that are placing increasing burdens on working Australians

Clear policies and legislation to counter wealth disparities, casualisation, wage stagnation, and long-term unemployment of young people

An extension of the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) or long-term wage subsidies to support the inadvertently affected young employees of businesses

A nation-wide education and skills plan to boost job accessibility and workforce participation

Rise in Jobseeker payments and youth allowance to enable young people to live with dignity and above the poverty line.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

UNSW Sydney
<https://www.unsw.edu.au/>

ACOSS:
www.acoss.org.au

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

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council:
<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/>



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

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Your voice strengthens our voice

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

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

*What's happened,
particularly since the 1980s,
is that the increase in CEO pay
has been staggeringly high
compared to modest increases
in rates for average workers,
and in many cases
stagnating wages."*

*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

