



Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COMMITTEE
Newsletter to Clergy, Parishes and Agencies
1 June 2012

Greetings!

This Newsletter aims to share with you some of the recent work of the SRC.

Preventing Violence Against Women

Our Diocesan strategy is being implemented, step by step.

- **Request for Liaison People in Parishes**

To follow up on the Anglicans Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) workshops run at the Regional Clergy Conferences, additional workshops on how to utilise the *Promoting Equal and Respectful Relationships in Faith Communities and Tool Kit* are being offered. The *Tool Kits* were distributed to all clergy attending the Conferences, however, some copies are still available.

The first of these additional workshops will be offered to the combined Deaneries of Melbourne, Coburg and Stonnington. This will be held on **Tuesday June 19th, from 6.00 to 7.30pm at St Stephen's Church, Richmond.**

A number of Anglican clergy have already identified a range of ways to integrate primary prevention of violence against women (PVAW) in their parish. These include:

- Appointing a PVAW parish coordinator to work with the PVAW Project Coordinator
- Having a speaker talk about PVAW to your congregation in the worship service followed up by a debrief after the service
- Utilising the Anglican Peer Mentor Program as a way to train volunteers in violence prevention

To discuss what options are going to work best for your situation, contact the PVAW Coordinator Dr Ree Boddé by email RBodde@mcd.edu.au or mobile 0450 039 288.

- **“Educating for the prevention of violence against women and children - What your Parish can do”** - This document is available for download from :
<http://www.melbourne.anglican.com.au/ServingCommunity/src/Pages/Prevention-of-Violence-Against-Women.aspx>

IVF and other Assisted Reproductive Technologies

We circulate a discussion paper by SRC Member, Dr Trisha Prentice, “Thinking Ethically and Pastorally from a Christian Perspective.” (Attached separately) Trisha’s pastoral intention in writing this Discussion paper is conveyed in her preface. Note that not all members of the SRC agree with all aspects of an ‘SRC Discussion Paper’.

Dr Trisha Prentice is a paediatrician-in-training specialising in neonatology. She has a special interest in bioethics, particularly reproductive technology and the complex issues surrounding neonatal viability. She holds a Masters of Bioethics. Trisha and her family are a part of a community house church in inner Melbourne, and enjoy living and serving in North Melbourne.

Indigenous Issues

Jason Hobba of the SRC, draws our attention to “Amnesty’s assessment of the Federal Government’s Indigenous policies” which suggests that the ‘Stronger Futures’ Legislation bears all the hallmarks and problems of the Northern Territory Emergency Response. As a result, it will continue to stigmatise Indigenous peoples in the Northern Territory and continue discrimination. See the following link: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-05-24/australia-criticised-in-latest-amnesty-report/4029984>

Note that “Reconciliation Week” has been from Sunday May 27 - June 3:

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

And the National Indigenous Youth Parliament is taking place at the moment in Canberra. The Program can be found here: http://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/indigenous_vote/niyp-program.htm. Some of the issues that it will deal with are Indigenous Corrections issues, Funding for Indigenous Youth, Immunisation, Youth Opportunities and Awareness.

Same-Sex Relationships

The members of the SRC continue to have some discussion of these matters from different viewpoints. We are looking for ways we can contribute to debate in a helpful manner. Any suggestions are welcome. Two members, Andrew Easton and Mark Hood, are writing papers on marriage.

The General Synod website conveys the resolutions in place on this subject, as most would be aware. The June TMA has relevant coverage on this subject.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Our Synod Motion 2011

- That Synod supports the National Disability Insurance Scheme and urges both Government and Non-government support for its continuing implementation.

You will also have noted some progress in the establishment of the NDIS. However there is a long way to go. The question is whether in-principle bipartisan support leads onto the budgetary commitments that are needed. Continued lobbying will be required.

Gambling Reform

- Synod Resolution 2011
“Synod affirmed the objectives of the National Churches Taskforce on Gambling, namely:
 - (a) supporting adoption of a national mandatory pre-commitment scheme that requires gamblers in all electronic gaming machine venues to choose spending limits;
 - (b) reducing access to cash in gambling venues as a measure to reduce the opportunity for unplanned expenditure on gambling;
 - (c) making effective restrictions on online gambling;
 - (d) expressing concern about the growth of gambling advertising in public spaces, including at sporting venues.”

You will have seen debate about gambling reform during the year. Legislation is now before the Parliament. Plainly, not as much has been achieved as we hoped for. We must persist!

- Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce - Statement on Poker Machine Reform, 26 April (Attachment 1)

Families - Wider Networks

- **International Anglican Family Network**

Link to latest newsletter 'Divided Families' & a note about the IAFN Birth Registration blog

The latest edition of the IAFN newsletter 'Divided Families' is now on-line at <http://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/newsletters/2012/may/index.cfm>.

Civil conflict, eviction from informal settlements and demolition of homes, drug and alcohol abuse, incarceration, migration in search of work, and family breakdown are just some of the circumstances that can split families apart.

The stories gathered in this newsletter 'Divided Families' describe some of the causes of separation and the pain and loss that go with it. But they also speak of innovative and hopeful projects undertaken by Anglican churches and Christian organisations which set out to heal and restore, offer practical support, and make life more bearable for those who have been cut off from their loved ones and those who would normally provide for the safety and daily needs of home and family.

'Divided Families' begins with a reflection from Jerusalem where barriers and check-points continue to create great stress among families who long to be and stay together. As the Easter season draws to an end we continue to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem and for the flourishing of all families around the world.

We Need To Hear From You! IAFN Birth Registration Blog: <http://registerbirths.blogspot.co.uk>

IAFN's previous newsletter 'Count Every Child' (Nov 2011) highlighted wide-scale under-registration of children and its negative impact on access to healthcare, education, safety, and participation in society.

IAFN is promoting the potential of churches to work with state and non-governmental agencies in order to help families overcome the obstacles to birth registration. To know better how to do this we need to hear the experience of Anglicans all over the Communion. So we respectfully invite you to let us know the situation in your area and how our churches might serve to make a difference. We have set up a blog at <http://registerbirths.blogspot.co.uk/> and hope you find this useful for sharing information. We look forward very much indeed to hearing from you.

Sent on behalf of the International Anglican Family Network by

The Revd Terrie Robinson

Anglican Communion Networks' Coordinator

Women's Desk Officer

The Anglican Communion Office

London, United Kingdom

Refugees/Asylum Seekers

Our Synod Resolution 2011

Synod, noting the contribution made by Australian residents who are former refugees, including members of our Church:

- (a) affirmed the need for policy on refugees and asylum seekers that is consistent with our moral obligations and international commitments; and
- (b) encouraged discussion of the Report 'A new approach : Breaking the Stalemate on Refugees and Asylum Seekers' by the Centre for Policy Development (CPD), as a contribution to improved policy and practice in this complex area.

Since Synod there has been effective lobbying to encourage community placement of some asylum seekers. This has been in response to concerns about the health of detainees after long-term detention. Subject to health and security checks, we have urged community-placements - a program which is being implemented effectively.

You may like to note the:

- BSL Letter to Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, 1 May, which said in part: “The Brotherhood of St Laurence (Brotherhood) welcomes the significant progress made by the Government to date in reforming the asylum seeking processing and accommodation system, implementing a uniform refugee determination process, including placing over 3700 people in community detention or on bridging visas.

Furthermore, we would like to bring to your attention that we welcome the measures recommended in the final report released by the Joint Select Committee on Australia’s Immigration Detention Network last month. We believe these recommendations are a positive pathway for refugee and asylum seeker policy.

More specifically, we support the use of the community release model as an alternative approach to immigration detention and their provision by welfare agencies to reduce acts of self-harm and increase the rates of voluntary repatriation for unsuccessful asylum seekers. We believe that the scaling up of the community release model would continue to increase rates of compliance and cooperation.

While we agree with the government’s stance on managing Australia’s borders, the Brotherhood welcomes the 90 day time limit to detention of asylum seekers who pass initial identity, health, character and security checks. We welcome the reforms introduced by the government and we hope that recommendations protecting the human rights of asylum seekers are implemented.”

I went this week with some former refugees to meet Senator Chris Bowen, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship. Our focus was those found to be refugees but with, thus far, a negative ASIO assessment who are detained indefinitely.

There is progress. The Minister and Attorney-General are working on an “Appeals mechanism” to allow a review of such cases. It is a complex matter : how to ensure natural justice for these people, whilst continuing to protect the community on the basis of security information.

The Minister agreed to meet with us again once he can announce a proposed remedy. We have been grateful for his initiatives on the community placement of asylum seekers/refugees who have passed health and security checks. In fact, this has been a significant achievement also in terms of ecumenical co-operation.

An issue I continue to ponder is how to better assist the many asylum seekers/refugees who suffer with post-traumatic stress disorders. There is so much healing needed. Many of us listen and pray with individuals, in the healing power of our Risen Lord Jesus. I wonder if we should organise healing services for those anxious and depressed from their traumatic years as refugees and asylum seekers. Any thoughts?

The Yarra Institute for Religion and Social Policy has researched and published a National Directory of Refugee and Asylum Seeker Services provided by the Churches in Australia.

The PDF can be downloaded from

<http://www.yarrainstitute.org.au/Publications/Directoryofasylumseekerservices.aspx>

Interfaith Declaration on the Arms Trade Treaty

Attached, is an *Interfaith Declaration on the Arms Treaty* which has so far been signed by a range of religious leaders and faith-based organisations around the world.

In July 2012, nations of the world will meet in new York to negotiate the Arms Trade Treaty at the United Nations. This will be the first global, legally binding agreement to regular the international trade in arms, preventing irresponsible and illicit transfers that fuel conflict, poverty and serious violations of human rights and international law every day.

Arms kill around 2,000 people very day, the majority of whom are civilians and until this year there has not been a single law controlling how arms are bought and sold around the world.

Churches have the unique ability to support this process by reminding governments of their moral responsibility to draft a treaty that will help save lives and protect the livelihoods of people around the world.

It must be strong enough to stop transfers of weapons if there is a significant risk that such would be used to commit serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law, to commit acts of genocide or crimes against humanity, to facilitate a pattern of sex- and gender-based violence, violent crime or organised crime, as well as to negatively impact on efforts to reduce poverty.

Our faith tells us that every human life is sacred. Hence we strongly advocate against violence that destroys life and human dignity. We believe that a strong Arms Trade Treaty based on human rights and International Humanitarian Law will save lives and reduce human suffering.

You can find our more information about the ATT and the Declaration at www.actforpeace.org.au.

The SRC is now sending the 'SRC Discussion Papers' and this Newsletter direct to interested lay people. Please let any interested people know that they can receive this material by sending their email address to our Executive Officer Rev Canon Dr Stephen Ames, sames@unimelb.edu.au , who will include them in the network.

Conclusion

In succinct fashion, this Newsletter aims to capture some of the matters of action in and through the SRC. Your responses are welcome. We will plan to provide another Newsletter in August.



Bishop Philip Huggins
Chair, Social Responsibilities Committee
Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

Attachment 1

Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce STATEMENT ON POKER MACHINE REFORM

26 April 2012

The Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce brings together leaders of the major Christian churches in Australia and the heads of their social services arms nationally. The Taskforce is united by a commitment to reduce the very substantive harm caused by poker machine gambling.

The Taskforce has consistently sought reform of the poker machine industry in Australia, calling for:

- the adoption of a national mandatory pre commitment scheme that requires gamblers in all electronic gaming venues to set spending limits on high loss poker machines
- \$1 maximum bets on all machines limiting losses to \$120 an hour
- reduced access to cash in gambling venues as a measure to reduce the opportunity for unplanned expenditure on gambling
- Improving other consumer protection measures as noted by the Taskforce

Australian churches have a long, proud history of social services provision. Every day the churches and their social services agencies see the destructive impact of poker machine gambling on individuals, families and communities, and we serve people whose lives have or are being damaged by these destructive machines.

We welcome the current, historic opportunity for poker machine reform. This opportunity is the culmination of years of research, policy development and advocacy. Our members are ongoing contributors to the debate, notably through the processes that led to the Productivity Commission reports of 1999 and 2010.

We encourage all politicians of goodwill to implement changes that will help prevent many Australians from developing a damaging addiction to poker machine gambling.

We remain committed to the full suite of reforms outlined above. If this cannot be achieved, we believe the draft legislation currently under consideration is a sufficient first step but should not be regarded as a substitute for further reform.

Membership of the Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce currently includes:

- Anglican Church of Australia
- Australian Christian Churches (formerly Assemblies of God)
- Baptist Union of Australia
- Catholic Church
- Churches of Christ
- Congregational Federation
- Lutheran Church
- Presbyterian Church
- Quakers
- The Salvation Army
- Uniting Church in Australia
- Anglicare Australia
- Baptist Care Australia
- Catholic Social Services Australia
- The Society of St Vincent de Paul
- UnitingCare Australia
- State based churches gambling taskforces in South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales

Contact: Judith Tokley 0408 824 306 / 02 6282 4307

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www.gamblingreform.org