



The ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE The Social Responsibilities Committee September Newsletter 2014

The SRC Website:

<http://www.melbourne.anglican.com.au/Search/default.aspx?k=sOCIAL%20RESPONSIBILITIES%20COMMITTEE>

THAT TIME OF THE YEAR

Football is in the air in a big way as the AFL Grand Final approaches, where we will see some extraordinary playing from great athletes. On the 17th September a statue in honour of the late



great **Jimmy Stynes** was unveiled outside the MCG, home to Melbourne Football Club.

There is also a bridge at Docklands named after Jimmy Stynes. He represented a powerfully attractive image of a man who grew to be larger than the champion footballer he was. This was celebrated at his funeral at St Paul's Cathedral on 27 May 2012. I recall hearing Stynes respond to a question about whether he prayed before a football game. It turned that he did pray - to play fairly and without fear.

During this year we also saw the passing of **Tommy Hafey** another football great by any standard. When I was a kid I used to watch Tommy Hafey playing in the back pocket for Richmond at the Punt Road Oval. The crowd around me would shout out 'The Hafe' whenever he punched the ball to prevent a mark or cleared the ball towards the centre line. Great stuff. He too has obviously impacted on many people's lives.



One testimony told of Hafey's belief that there was more to life than football. Another remarked that Hafey made the person the centre of his interest and this was why people responded so positively to him. Yet another remarked on how he created a great atmosphere in the club – and he was at its centre. Eddie McQuire said that Hafey wasn't religious, football was his religion. But as noted above Hafey believed there was more to life than football, saying that after football you had decades of your life to live. (This is supported by AFL research showing that players with a life outside football have much less trouble with alcohol than other players. Should this be incorporated into the AFL image of a 'real man'?)

In public sentiment Hafey counts as an example of a 'good' life, an achievable good life, without religion and without the Gospel. He is not the only example. He embodies the view that you don't need God to be good. What seems to be embodied in him is his belief in the importance of the individual person, the importance of social whole you are part of – the team, the football club – as well as a capacity to learn from experience, and a rule of life for every day, all framed within the horizon of 'there is more to life'. On the public speaking circuit he even had a much sought after motivational 'good news' message for living well. Many of the marks of religion.

Zero Tolerance During the year we have also seen a number occasions where the AFL and individual clubs and players have sent a strong message of zero tolerance for racism and homophobia. This is surely a powerful contribution to life in Australia. I would like to suggest another matter for the AFL. If I was to punch someone, or elbow them in the face, or sit on them and throttle them when not playing football I could be charged with assault. How is it that when this happens on the football field, especially behind or after the play, the offender is not liable to an assault charge? Isn't this to sanction gratuitous violence?



Brian Lake attacking the throat of Drew Petrie

Earlier in the year we had 'The Bump'. The media uproar about Jack Viney being banned for two matches went full throttle. Everyone was clear that Jack was unfairly banned. He was bracing himself for the coming bump – anyway 'split second' stuff. You don't have time. The media also commented that if the decision prevailed the game would lose its essential 'for real men' character. No critical comment on possible damage. (A different response was an article by Greg Baum, *The Age* 10 May on changes going on and still

needed in AFL culture). Understandably there were celebrations all round when the decision was reversed on appeal. Headlines shouted - *THE BUMP IS BACK*. But almost immediately other examples of bumps were forth coming that quickly showed up the shallow talk that 'real men' can give and take any bump. Since then Collingwood's Steele Sidebottom scored three weeks suspension for his crude bump on Maverick Weller. In August Brian Lake attacking the throat of North's Drew Petrie was penalised for four weeks and also in August Brent Harvey was suspended for three weeks for pinning Liam Picking to the ground with a forearm to the throat.

The AFL Administration has been working to ensure that players avoid high head and neck tackles. Last year AFL Operations Manager Mark Evans said, "From our research, the number one guiding principle for the fans is that the game should remain a physically tough and contested game with body contact, however nearly three quarters of the fans agreed that player welfare should be at the heart of the laws [of the game]." Late last year the AFL and the Howard Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health announced a research initiative targeting former AFL players as part of ongoing research into concussion and mild traumatic brain injury. All very good. What about on field gratuitous violence? Why isn't it a criminal offence?



Mr Hockey addresses G20 Finance Ministers

IS IT ONLY A MARKETING PROBLEM?

"The budget hasn't been sold well" ... at least that is what is still being said in the media, by business leaders and by government ministers. Nevertheless the widely held perception of Australians is that the budget is not fair and this is at the root of the people not accepting it. Blaming the marketing of the budget denies any legitimacy to the public's perception of the budget. It also shows how out of touch are those who are blaming the marketing. Framing the budget was influenced by the Audit Commission's report, which represented a business vision for Australia. It is too one sided.

A vision more oriented to the common good is needed – not perfect but recognisable as a 'fair go'. Another problem was and is the rhetoric of 'budget crisis' calling for drastic measures unfairly targeting people on the lower part of the socio economic scale.

(Now we are going to war with no mention of the effect on the budget). But the question of a 'fair' budget cannot be answered persuasively if only expenditure but not revenue is seriously up for reconsideration. The Henry Report on Taxation has barely been touched by either side of politics. So it is good to see Mr Hockey urging the G20 to crack down on multinationals and wealthy individuals avoiding paying taxes. He is also urging growth of 2% above trend expectations. Tim Costello asked who will benefit from this extra growth. Will it be the top 1% that is already advantaged by the economic system? It would also be good to know what effect this extra 2% growth will have on the climate. Mr Hockey thinks the G20 is about economics not climate change.

CAPITALISTS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Henry M. Paulson Jr, Michael Bloomberg, and Thomas Steyer, are founders of a company called, 'Risky Business'. Recently they were favorably discussed by Robert Hunziker of *UK Progressive* (<http://www.ukprogressive.co.uk/capitalists-take-on-climate-change/article27786.html>). Hunziker sees them as offering a JFK level of leadership on climate change. They are three capitalists on Capital Hill challenging business leaders to focus on the economic risks associated with a changing climate. See Paulson's, *The Coming Climate Crash*, New York Times/Opinion, June 21, 2014 and also their website.

Henry Paulson article' says: "We're staring down a climate bubble that poses enormous risks to both our environment and economy. The warning signs are clear and growing more urgent as the risks go unchecked. This is a crisis we can't afford to ignore." Hunziker thinks Paulson "cleverly uses the word "bubble" to describe the impending problem, and it is beautifully descriptive because, in point of fact, bubbles grow and grow until bursting, then its too late to do much about it. He knows all about that. (US Secretary of the Treasury 2006-2009) As such, climate change is following the same script as financial bubbles."

Hunziker and others anticipate an economic renaissance with the switch to renewable clean energy economy. One piece of evidence for this comes from the fact that between 1910 and 1930 U.S. GDP increased 300%. Hunziker exclaims, "That 'whopper' of an economy occurred while one of the biggest industries in America, manufacturing of horse-drawn carriages, went out of business!!! The conversion from horse-drawn carriages to automobiles (the 15 millionth Model T rolled off the assembly line in 1927) set the nation's economy on fire." This is not a new thought even in Australia. The Brumby government certainly deterred a large amount of investment in renewables with massive implications for business and employment. This could be repeated if the Renewable Energy Target (RET) is removed or reduced. Unfortunately the PM is not joining other heads of nations at the UN conference on climate change called by the General Secretary Ban Ki-moon. He is too busy.

'FACT CHECK' ON ELECTRICITY PRICES

"We have 9,000 megawatts (nine big power stations equivalent) of excess capacity in electricity generation ... We have more than 15% overcapacity in generation in Australia" Industry minister Ian Macfarlane, [ABC Radio](#), September 9.

The 'Fact Check' by Alan Pears AM, Sustainable Energy and Climate Researcher RMIT University, notes the point by the latest [Renewable Energy Target review](#) from a panel led by businessman Dick Warburton. "The current levels of oversupply are used to argue for no new investment in renewable energy: In a market environment where capacity is already oversupplied and demand may continue to decline it is quite reasonable (and efficient) for no new investment in capacity to occur." This may be true. However this argument confuses the role of the RET with the role of the National Electricity

Market. As the Panel's report points out, the "NEM was designed to correct [oversupply in the market]".

The [objectives of the RET](#), on the other hand are to: encourage the additional generation of electricity; to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases; to ensure that renewable energy sources are sustainable. Indeed if the RET was left untouched, an efficient market should correct the supply-demand imbalance on its own, via the least profitable generation withdrawing from the market. And in this process, [consumers may benefit from lower electricity prices](#). For more go to the giant link:

http://theconversation.com/factcheck-does-australia-have-too-much-electricity-31505?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=The%20Weekend%20Conversation%20-%201913&utm_content=The%20Weekend%20Conversation%20-%201913+CID_747f97a720904368e7fd620229206296&utm_source=campaign_monitor&utm_term=FactCheck%20does%20Australia%20have%20too%20much%20electricity

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The 2013 Synod called for the SRC to present an interim report in 2014 on how this synod may help promote this value in Australia. We are now in a very a very different context with cuts to university funding and an increase in fees with consequences for students and the removal of the major part of the Gonski funding for schools. The inevitable consequence seems to be further disparities in educational opportunities and for many a reduced capacity to make the most of the opportunities available. We are being moved to a US style education system, which is related to the US style economy, also a US style health system. Is that what we want?

Acclaimed Australian author and historian Thomas Keneally recently suggested (Q/A 26 May) a view of education as one generation freely offering the next generation a heritage worth handing on, which we want them in turn to hand on. Obviously, this would be a gift with corresponding obligations for those who enjoy this heritage. It would be part of what it means to be 'Australian', to be part of the 'Commonwealth'.

Mr. Pyne invokes the taxpayers who significantly fund education even with higher HECS fees, as if they unfairly bear this burden. Well what do people think about this matter? Do the vast majority of Australians want an education system that is wholly within the market? Prof Glyn Davis from the University of Melbourne commented recently that we have not had a debate about this question, even though we have somehow 'decided' to go in this direction. This is relevant to the Synod motion about equal *educational* opportunities. What is our fundamental view of education? Where will we find the Anglican Church's view?

THE ROLE OF BORDERS

"Our border creates the space for us to be us and for us to become all we can be."
(Mr Scott Morrison as reported in *The Weekend Australian* 10 May).

Are asylum seekers perceived as a threat to our borders and so a threat to 'us' becoming 'all we can be'? Is the arrival of asylum seekers attempting unauthorised (but not illegal) entry into Australia a deeper threat to 'our' sense of ourselves as a sovereign nation? Is this what is behind the 'indignant' tone, the 'how dare they' tone, that comes through the government's commentary on asylum seekers? Is this what motivates the utterly immoral and inhumane treatment of asylum seekers? If so we need to take stock that 'us becoming all we can be' is stunted by such fear and falsehood. Mr Morrison's move to negotiate with cross benches on TPVs for a limited group of people is small step

in the right direction. Not perfect but a lot better for them than the off-shore options. There is an opening for a discussion about a better visa status for all who are assessed as refugees. The quotation above is an opening for considering what it means to 'become all we can be'. There are other border considerations: financial transactions, minerals, gas, people who overstay their travel visas.

THE WAR AGAINST ISIS

Like you I am bombarded with many different considerations about the war against ISIS. Australian forces will engage in this war in various ways and it has already reached the population at home. What is this war really about for ISIS and for Australia and its allies? For ISIS it is a significant step in establishing the prophetic vision of the Caliphate under which all life on earth is to be forcibly ordered under Allah. Western leaders deny this motivation as genuinely religious. Mr Cameron is sure that this cannot be done in the name of any God. But that is naïve and underestimates the strain of religious fervour running through ISIS. That is also quite different from the many Muslim leaders who have denied that ISIS is a genuine form of Islam. This is also shown by the examples in history of Christian and Muslim communities living peaceably together. Australian Muslims need to know that they are clearly distinguished from ISIS. Churches must surely join with other Australians in supporting Muslims and helping quell anti-Muslim feeling.

For ISIS there are no earthly boundaries that cannot be crossed to give effect to the will of God so perceived. Already they have gained territory and resources on a scale to feed the reality of the vision and its power to attract people to the cause. Syria, Iraq, Turkey are all threatened. If ISIS took control of Iraq it would be enormously empowered with resources to extend its form of Jihad. For Australia and its allies there is a hardly a case for doing nothing. But what exactly is to be done and by whom and what is the risk of the whole thing getting out of control? This will require a level of explanation that the bipartisan approach to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is not known for providing. There is also a place for learning from how our previous involvement in Iraq has helped produced ISIS, along with other actors like Saudi Arabia and Iran. What are the objectives of this war? This might become clear after the meeting on Wednesday 24th September in New York. Degrading ISIS is achievable but destroying is not. Preventing genocide in Iraq is a just cause. Not doing so recalls Rwanda and Bosnia. Confining objectives to helping Iraq defend itself allows ISIS the freedom to withdraw into Syria and return, as the Taliban in Afghanistan used Pakistan. But crossing the line into Syria without UN resolution justifies others crossing our own 'lines' and sits uneasily with criticism of Russia crossing the line into Ukraine. Mission creep is a big risk. An open ended war cannot be the expression of a just cause.

Our Foreign Minister Julie Bishop says that this is an ideological war which won't be won solely by military means. On what fronts will this war be fought and by what means? ISIS' powerful internet propaganda strengthens its supporters and threatens the rest of the world. One issue is the description of ISIS as evil, even pure evil. I question the description if it means there is no sense in praying that ISIS be delivered from the evil that has captured them, however that is to be understood. I am also concerned about how this description functions for us. The trouble is that if we pick a standard low enough, then by comparison anything can look good. Particularly ourselves and our allies. We should rather see ourselves in the light of a higher not a lower standard, lest we simply blinker ourselves and fail to reckon with our own ambiguities as a nation as well as those of our allies and the impact this has on others. We will be wrong footed. We treated the PLO, the North Vietnamese, the Taliban, and the Assad regime as so bad we could not bring ourselves to talk with them. Remember in Australia it was better to be dead than Red (apart from trade) – until Nixon unexpectedly went to China. Apart from Assad we eventually talked with all of them. Whatever happens militarily will we at some point want to talk with ISIS? One preparatory ideological counter

move is a clear presentation, adapted to different audiences, of the ideological position of ISIS, its historical roots and larger context in which it has emerged. We need a proper narrative that is not self-serving nor gilding of ISIS, but offers an alternative for our world. This might help us all grasp more clearly what this war is about, help show young people an alternative to ISIS and point towards a shareable future. This is one way to keep in touch with the peacemakers who are blessed, whoever they are, with loving our enemies, and seeking an answer to the prayer 'deliver us from evil', for us and for ISIS.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Despite not having a 'compass needle' on human rights Australia has had a good record on maintaining human rights in an ad hoc way, according to Jillian Triggs, President of the Human Rights Commission. Listen to a fascinating discussion by Triggs of recent national debates on human rights and the forthcoming debate about new terrorist laws and why Australia is 'exceptional' compared to similar nations. See her recent lecture, <http://events.unimelb.edu.au/recordings/151-human-rights-lecture-australian-exceptionalism-international-human-rights-and>.

LINKS TO THE CHURCHES ANALYSES OF STATE ELECTION ISSUES

Anglicans

November 19, 7.30am Deacon Edge, for the next Archbishop's Breakfast Conversation: Looking at the Priority Issues for the Next Government with Steve Bracks and ... [to be completed]

Catholic Social Services Melbourne

http://www.css.org.au/Portals/51/CSSV_SafetynetA4brochure_FINAL.pdf

Salvation Army

<http://www.sarmy.org.au/Global/SArmy/Social/vsppu/Submissions/VSPPU%20Submissions%202014/2014-15%20Budget%20Response%20and%20Analysis%20FINAL.pdf>

Uniting Church

<http://blogs.victas.uca.org.au/cfm/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Victorian-Election-Kit-Sept-2014.pdf>

OTHER NEWS LETTERS

Ethos

<http://www.ethos.org.au/Online-Articles/Engage-Mail>

Salvation Army on Housing Affordability and Mental Illness

<http://www.sarmy.org.au/en/Social/vsppu/Publications/>

Social Policy Connections

<http://www.socialpolicyconnections.com.au/?cat=37> (Hit 'Home' for access to a very successful website.)

Uniting Church

<http://blogs.victas.uca.org.au/cfm/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/JustFocus-September14-petite.pdf>

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St Matthew's Day