



Connecting peace, ecology and justice from the Gospel perspective

**The Year of Faith and the International Year of Water Co-operation      JUNE 2013**

## Co-ordinator's Comments

In the words of our national anthem, Australia is 'girt by sea'. When thinking about international co-operation on fresh water, we have to remember that healthy rivers and healthy seas are part of a whole - and interdependent. Oceans also unite us with other nations, peoples, and ecosystems. Sadly, political, military and economic powers manipulate Australia's 'girt by sea' status for their own purposes so that the oceans divide. One embarrassing example is the excision of Australia's migration zone from the mainland to try to keep boats bearing asylum seekers out of sight. This issue of Columban Connections features the theme of oceans.

**Anne Lanyon**

## Catholic Social Teaching

The ocean is the origin of life (on Earth) and covers over 70% of our planet's surface. It contains 99% of the habitat for all living creatures on Earth.

Humans have explored less than 10% of the ocean, yet we use it to conduct 90% of our international trade and 50% of our communications. The majority of the area where life exists is underwater. But around 80% of ocean pollution comes from human land-based activities. Research has found that almost half of Americans (and maybe similar figures could pertain to Australians) believe that "what I do in my life doesn't impact on ocean health much at all."

If Catholic social teaching is about anything it is about giving us a grounding to look beyond the headlines and to challenge accepted public opinion, as per the above quote. It teaches us to be active and visionary, to see the unholiness of aspects of our present stewardship of the Earth and the sacredness of our obligation for the future.

**Jack Evans**

## What We've Been Up To

We welcomed **Sr Kateia Kaikai** ssm back to the Centre (see Justice page). We said "Bon Voyage" to **Charles Rue**. Kateia spent 3 months in Rome and France on a renewal program. Charles is in Europe where one of his activities is a presentation at an Eco-Ethics Conference in Stockholm.

Through our partnerships, we have:

a) Hosted the AGM of **Peacebuilders International**  
[www.peacebuilders.in](http://www.peacebuilders.in)

b) Prepared and promoted nationally resources for

Jubilee Sunday which coincided with Pentecost (May 19th). If you missed that date, you can adapt them to suit another time. <http://bit.ly/1bSYmTU>

## FEN (Faith Ecology Network)

a) We welcomed Danny Ho who has volunteered his services to help improve the FEN website.

[www.faithecolony.net.au](http://www.faithecolony.net.au)

b) With the FEN team, we are planning a multifaith public prayer/meditation vigil on the issue of mining. - See notice over page.

## Advocacy

Our volunteer, **Matthew Nicholl** has assisted in the letter-writing campaign to Premier O'Farrell and Minister Parker to overturn the proposal to hunt in NSW National Parks. Anne Lanyon has participated in public rallies.

## Our education programs continue apace:

a) A very successful Culture of Peace Formation program with a small, but willing group of educators. Watch this space for the creation of a network of previous cohorts who want to team up with others involved in sustainability education.

b) Lecture and tutorials on social justice and CST with Religious Education students at Australian Catholic University, Strathfield campus.

c) Workshops on globalization (chocolate), ecological conversion and social justice with Broken Bay Social Justice Co-ordinators, Monte St Angelo College, Mt St Benedict College, ACU North Sydney, Sydney Archdiocesan Primary school students (Eastern Region).



Tara and Yasmin, Georges River Grammar School  
Social Justice Workshop, ACU, Strathfield

## “Girt by Sea” – and the US Asia Pivot

Because of our geographical position between the Indian and Pacific Oceans the US military-industrial arm is using Australia for its own ends. We are increasingly becoming beholden to the military/security industry.

The **2013 Defence White Paper** states:

*“The emerging Indo-Pacific system is predominantly a maritime environment with Southeast Asia at its geographic centre. The region’s big strategic challenges will last for decades....”* (2:9)

<http://bit.ly/18wK0XN>



It seems much easier to get maritime military co-operation than co-operation on ensuring clean adequate available water for all.

Most people seem uninterested in the consequences. A recent Morgan Poll showed that “National Security” is 2nd last on the list of concerns.

Source: Roy Morgan Single Source January 2011 - December 2012, n= 87,416.

### Some examples of what is occurring:

#### Cost of Darwin US marine base

An April 13th Media release by Greens Senator **Scott Ludlam** stated that the cost of the base for the projected 2,500 US marines will be \$1.6bn

<http://bit.ly/13Rg1d7>

#### Coastal Surveillance

The latest budget included \$9.9 million for the net additional cost of the navy’s role in so called “border protection” which mainly involves trying to deter asylum-seeker boats.

[www.budget.gov.au/2013-14/content/bp2/html/in](http://www.budget.gov.au/2013-14/content/bp2/html/in)

## Talisman Saber War Games July 15th - Aug 5th

Again, the Great Barrier Reef area will be the arena for the biennial TALISMAN SABER 2013 **War Games** throughout Queensland, and in adjacent maritime areas of the Coral Sea. It is a US led, Australian supported exercise involving 23,000 Defence personnel. <http://bit.ly/19B5S9o>

## Raytheon in Australia

Raytheon, a major US defence contractor, is building the combat system components of the Hobart Class **submarines** in South Australia. The world’s largest producer of guided missiles, it is also involved in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

Wikipedia has some of its history:

*In August 2010, Raytheon announced that it had partnered with a jail in California, in order to use prisoners as test subjects for a new non-lethal weapon system that penetrates about a 64th of an inch under your skin.*

Raytheon’s increasing involvement in Australia includes corporate sponsorship of the US Studies Centre, University of Sydney. <http://bit.ly/10v5lmc>

*Crikey.com* points out some of the economic benefits to Raytheon in related service provision to government. eg. \$700 million in 2010. <http://bit.ly/SdasgT>

Raytheon Australia is located at the naval industry hub of Techport near Adelaide. Through this hub, it is also promoting its Maths and Science education program [www.mathmovesu.com/](http://www.mathmovesu.com/)

It makes interesting reading to see how Raytheon perceives its ‘mission’. God’s mission in the world is about life, not death. Jn 10:10. Peace brought about by violence is not true peace. It is temporary and eventually leads to more and greater violence. The Gospel teaches us that true peace comes from imitating Jesus in non-violence. It is imperative that we educate for Gospel Peace.

### Alternatives to Warfare

**Nautilus**, a global network sees the key to reducing global insecurity lies in the creation of a global civil society committed to joint problem-solving.

<http://nautilus.org/>

**Pace e Bene Australia** are hosting talks, workshops and retreats on peacebuilding in July. **Wes Howard Brook** and **Sue Ferguson Johnson** will lead these sessions in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. For details check on [www.paceebene.org.au](http://www.paceebene.org.au)

## Fascinating Oceans

Google has a mind blowing set of images depicting ocean currents – deep sea currents and surface currents. It images a myriad of colour with heat distribution and nutrient flows. The maps form a collage; not unlike a modern painting the images draw us into the fascinating world of nature's rhythms. <http://bit.ly/19gNiAw>

When we speak the language of the ocean science we enter a mystery of nature, partly revealing but leaving much hidden. "Ocean literacy in a nut shell" is the claim of a learning website – currents and corals, deep sea thermal vents and exotic creatures, nutrient flows feeding fish small and great, mangrove fish nurseries and Antarctic krill to nourish the mother whale and her calf.

[www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/ocean](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/ocean)



Novels and poems about the sea are many since ancient times. They tell of oceans as epic adventure, beauty and fury.

The Yanyuwa people, whose homelands are the Sir Edward Pellew Group of Islands in the Northern Territory, are saltwater people. They have danced and sung about their sea country for thousands of years. Their name for themselves li-Anthawirriyarra means "the people whose spiritual origins are derived from the sea.

See "Earthsong" Vol 2, Issue 5, Autumn 2013.

[www.earthsong.org.au](http://www.earthsong.org.au)

The oceans give life-giving services to the earth and all creatures. Surface ocean currents transfer excessive heat created at the Equator towards the Poles. Deep sea currents bring nutrients from the Poles to the fishing grounds. Oceans, not too cold and not too hot, lead to the growth of delicate and diverse coral reefs. The bishops along the coast of

Queensland rightly wrote for Catholic Earth Care on the Great Barrier Reef as a spiritual wonderland.

<http://marinebio.org/oceans/marine-life-cycle.asp>

<http://www.botos.com/marine/antarctic01.html>

A very serious threat to oceans is the impact of Climate Change on sea water. The impacts are like a litany of disasters – acid waters dissolving the shells of crustaceans, rising sea temperatures that spawn cyclones, the sea as an over-loaded nitrogen sink struggling to absorb atmospheric gases, plastics dumped from ships and polluting oil spills choking sea life, rising sea levels encroaching on productive river deltas and coastal settlements. <http://bit.ly/16eNNcz>

Many people of good will and governments are striving to understand the seas better, campaigning and passing laws to protect the oceans and all that depend on them for life. International laws and national regulation of the fish catch to avoid over fishing help protect both fingerlings and adult breeders.

Regulation also covers the pollution caused by water run-off from agricultural lands and cities, plus expanded development of harbours to serve vested interests such as the fossil fuel industry. Well financed marine research over decades forms the objective base needed for regulation.

Importantly, regulations must be monitored with inspectors adequately financed for the task. Hefty fines imposed for breaches become realistic deterrents as happened with bilge discharges in Sydney Harbour.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves/>

The transport of goods by ocean going ships is one of the most energy efficient, much better than rail and road transport. Sadly, Australia has sold off its coastal transport ships. The cost and condition of labour was a central issue.

Many Catholic groups, working out of organizations such as Seafarer clubs or Anti-slavery movements, campaign not only against abusive work conditions but against the unjust competition created by using 'flags of convenience'. This is a gap in international law that needs to be closed.

<http://bit.ly/1015CuL>

## Support the PEJ Centre

With our small staff, we do what we can to connect peace, ecology and justice issues. If you wish to support us in any way, eg financially or as a volunteer letter writer, we appreciate it.

Arrogance towards the natural world goes hand-in-hand with arrogance towards people with the least power. How can we grow in humility and see the world through the eyes of those who suffer injustice? We can stand in solidarity with them in whatever way possible. First we have to listen and learn from them.

### **Nestle Chairman says water is not a human right**

“In a candid interview for the documentary *We Feed the World*, Nestlé Chairman Peter Brabeck makes the astonishing claim that water isn’t a human right. He attacks the idea that nature is good, and says it is a great achievement that humans are now able to resist nature’s dominance. He thinks everyone should be working harder and longer but then shows Nestle factories are highly robotized with ‘almost no people.’ <http://bit.ly/12gtrzf>

There is a Europe-wide campaign to tell the European Commission that water is a human right, and to ask them to enact legislation to ensure this is protected. <http://www.right2water.eu/> Australians can write to Nestle in Oz.

### **Australian wastefulness affects Kiribati**

Being a human face of climate change, I realize that my involvement with and contribution to the PEJ Centre is vital for today and the future generation of low – lying Pacific islands such as Kiribati. It hasn’t been so easy to raise awareness of how Australian wastefulness affects the livelihood of my Kiribati people and other communities vulnerable to the impact of climate change. I give a workshop called “*Ecology, Justice and Our Future, a Pacific Perspective*” and hopefully it helps create opportunities for Australians of all creeds to make big changes in their life styles and become part of the solution.



Australia needs to continue to cut its greenhouse emissions. The Coal Seam Gas and other mining industries here in Australia and in other economically

developed countries are the main carbon pollution emitters that contribute to the environmental changes now being experienced by people in Kiribati and Tuvalu. Why are the people of Kiribati and Tuvalu paying the price for a problem they didn’t cause?

**Kateia Kaikai SMSM**

### **Fukushima Leaks and Sandy Sewage**

Not only did the disasters of the tsunami at Fukushima and Hurricane Sandy cause huge devastation to the people living along those shore lines, but extensive ocean pollution has occurred. Tepco is struggling to store irradiated water and future leaks could reach the Pacific Ocean. After Sandy, 11 bn tons of sewage overflowed into the Atlantic Ocean. With sea levels rising rapidly, these types of problems could quickly become significantly greater. <http://bit.ly/12XqOmp>

### **Sea Country Protected Areas**

The first officially acknowledged Australian Indigenous Protected Area over the sea was launched in May. The Dhimurru IPA will extend 40 kilometres out to sea from the Gove Peninsula around the north-western tip of the Gulf of Carpentaria. “It’s important because, in our culture, we have to look after the land and the sea,” says Dhimurru ranger Lisa Dhurrkay. “Our responsibility doesn’t stop at the shoreline.” <http://bit.ly/16GjMTS>

### **“Mums Across the Pacific”**

Mothers in Australia will hold a video conference on 4<sup>th</sup> July with “Moms across America” to ask them how GM food has affected their families. If you have a question you want them to ask, contact MADGE. MADGE is a network of Mothers Against Damaging Genetic Modification of Food. [www.madge.org.au](http://www.madge.org.au)

### **Transparency and Justice Across the Seas**

Australian corporations involved in extractive industries in the Pacific Region and increasingly Africa and Asia need to be held accountable for social conflict and environmental damage associated with their projects. Jubilee Australia has worked hard on a crucial way of doing this. The Australian Government’s Export Finance and Insurance Credit agency EFIC, has a track record of supporting mineral, oil and gas projects in the Asia Pacific region. The parliament has a great opportunity to make EFIC more accountable. Currently they hide behind the Freedom of Information Act. Find out more about Jubilee Australia’s efforts to get legislative reform of EFIC. <http://bit.ly/13S2fGW>

Write to Trade Minister **Craig Emerson** at [Craig.Emerson.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:Craig.Emerson.mp@aph.gov.au)

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### **Columban Mission Institute**

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## A public prayer/meditation vigil about mining fossil fuels



**Martin Place Ampitheatre, Sydney (George Street end)**

**Wednesday 14th August 2013  
4.30pm - 6pm**

**People of all faiths and of none are invited to gather at this peaceful event to reflect about care for the earth and its people in the face of the escalation of fossil fuel mining in Australia.**

*The vigil will include silence, prayer, meditation, chanting and singing.*

FEN is an interfaith network which dialogues about faith and ecology.

For further information please contact  
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**RESPECT EARTH**