

# CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE AUSTRALIA

Member Organisation of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO)  
NGO in consultative (Roster) status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

**Welcome to the first National E-Newsletter of South Australia's term of office.**

I hope you have all been able to experience the wonderful Easter ceremonies, a very special and holy time in the Liturgical Year.



*From the left: Sr. Liz Morris, Sr. Kerry Keenan, Geraldine Davis, Fr John Herd, Margaret Quinn, Maureen Clark, Joan Young, Anne Marie Clark.*

The Installation Mass was celebrated on the Feast of the Presentation and was also the closing Mass for the year of Consecrated Life, Mass was Celebrated by Archbishop Wilson and Fr. John Herd, our Chaplain and Fr. David Orr, Chaplain for the previous National Executive and a number of other Clergy, as well as many religious including Sr. Liz Morris and Sr. Kerry Keenan our spiritual advisors. Mr. Michael Atkinson, Speaker for the House of Assembly, Ms Katrine Hildyard MP Member for Reynell and Lady Mayoress, Mrs. Genevieve Theseira-Haese also attended with many members of CWL-SA, also a number of members of CWLNSW including outgoing National President Mrs Carolyn Metcalf and Vice President Mrs Peg McEntee and

our new National Public Officer Mrs Patricia Liddiard as well as many Family and Friends.

These last few months we have been busy sorting out our duties and also working to appoint a Public Relations Officer as per the decision made at the National Council Meeting in Parramatta, 22nd September that we advertise the position and interview to employ a suitable person for this role. A motion regarding this position has been prepared for the AGM Teleconference Meeting 26th May which Delegates from Member Organisations will vote on. This motion is to make the necessary alterations to the constitution because this position will no longer be part of the National Executive.

Member Organisations will receive a copy of the job description, and Conditions of Employment and be asked to ratify the appointment of the person whom we have selected to fill this position.

Carolyn Metcalf represented CWLA at the dedication service of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship NSW/ACT Synod Committee held in Sydney on February 10th. Peg McEntee attended on behalf of CWL-NSW. They were warmly welcomed and shown how very pleased they were to have CWLA represented.

Moya Potts was able to represent us at The Young Catholic Fellowship meeting which was also in February.

Sonia De Mezza has made a submission, with cooperation from other convenors regarding Surrogacy, which has been circulated to Member Organisations and is now working on another “Help Knockout Internet Pornography”. She is also responding to a Senate Inquiry on Domestic Violence and Gender Inequality. We can be very proud of the research and quality of the work

carried out on our behalf by Sonia, Jane, Deirdre and Helen.

Jane Munro has just attended the CSW/NY 60. Many members are preparing to attend the WUCWO Asia Pacific Regional Conference to be held in Suva, Fiji 2nd to 6th May. Reports of these Conferences will be in the next E-Newsletter.

May God Bless you all in this Jubilee Year of Mercy.



**Anne Marie**

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*"In Christ and Through Christ, humanity has acquired full awareness of its dignity and the meaning of its existence."*

- Pope John Paul II



A Syrian refugee child in front of his tent in Zaatari refugee camp. Melih Cevdet Teksen/



*'Compassion is the radicalism of our time.'*

— Dalai Lama XIV

## Refugees and Asylum Seekers

There is an eerie irony attaching to the image of the tiny Syrian girl surrounded by the dusty shantytown that is Zaatari Refugee Camp, home to nearly 80,000 of Jordan's 600 000-plus refugees. She wears a pink jersey sporting the image of Marie the kitten from the 1970s children's film *The Aristocats*. Marie is amongst the West's most enduring cinematic symbols of self-absorbed, privileged cuteness, thanks to the creative genius of Walt Disney.

Meanwhile, as Russian aircraft depart Syria amidst a fragile cease-fire, European nations become increasingly polarized as their governments battle to cope morally, financially and politically with over 1 million migrant and refugee boat arrivals during 2015 alone (another 3700 are believed to have perished en route).

As refugees are shut out at European borders, we've witnessed members of our own medical and legal professions, churches and religious communities, teachers, trade unions and many more individuals speaking out about the return of 267 asylum seekers to Nauru. Amidst this furore, the High Court on 3 February held that

'we need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference'

Pope Francis, 'Laudato Si.'

the Government's fast-tracked, retrospective legislation to legalise its arrangements on Nauru is valid. As 'Baby Asha' disappears into community detention and fades from the nation's consciousness, the Turnbull government holds fast to its floundering resettlement program with \$55 million having been paid to Cambodia for the resettlement of two refugees.

On the day following the High Court's decision, Bishop Long, ACB Spokesman for Refugees and a former refugee, affirmed, *'The Catholic Church opposes mandatory detention and offshore detention because these policy responses do not respect the dignity of people seeking our help.'*

Despite the countless voices raised in concern, successive governments continue to offer insufficient answers to our urgent questions about children languishing in detention, the lack of leadership in formulating a robust Asia-Pacific regional processing framework, and how a country - 14th in world rankings for GDP per capita - can justify an annual humanitarian program numbering barely a quarter of an MCG crowd at an AFL grand final?

Let us hope and pray that compassion will take a front row seat as the first World Humanitarian Summit unfolds in Turkey in May, and that the spirit of Pope Francis' words prevails nations work to save lives and reduce hardship:

### **'Closing the Gap' on Indigenous Disadvantage**



**'an Indigenous child is more likely to be locked up in prison than they are to finish high school' - Stan Grant - IQ2 Speech on racism, October 2015**

'there should be no loss of the values and principles of humanity, respect for the dignity of every person, mutual subsidiarity and solidarity, however much they may prove, in some moments of history, a burden difficult to bear'

Pope Francis, Address to Holy See Diplomats, 11 January 2016

On Wednesday 10 February 2016, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull presented the annual Closing the Gap Report. The PM reported success with its targets has been mixed.

Halving the gap in child mortality rates by 2018 is on track. Immunization rates for Indigenous children is high. Halving the gap in year 12 attainment by 2020 is also on track. However, other target outcomes have been disappointing. Life expectancy of Indigenous Australians is still 10 years shorter than non-Indigenous Australians. Halving the gap in employment by 2018 is not on track, nor are school attendance rates improving. Finally, in response to the appalling disparities in incarceration rates, Indigenous leaders are now calling for the incarceration gap to be included in the program targets.

With the recent news fresh in our minds that a ten-year old Indigenous child in WA's Kimberley felt such a profound sense of hopelessness she was compelled to take her own life, we are reminded that the rate of suicide for Indigenous people is twice that of non-Indigenous. In looking for a way forward towards hope we are guided by the words of the Australian Catholic Bishops. They encourage us to talk supportively of Indigenous reconciliation and recognition within our social and community groups, our workplaces, our parishes and on social media. We should also, they say, write to the media and elected representatives to affirm our support for 'recognition and justice for the Indigenous people of Australia'.

**'what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow'**  
Pope John Paul II, Alice Springs, 1986

### **Safe Schools Australia**

There is no doubt there is urgent work to be done to ensure school children within minority groups, including LGBTI young people, are safe from harassment, discrimination and bullying. There is also no doubt that the Safe Schools Program's creators were passionately committed to their task. Nevertheless, there are aspects of the program that on any view of it, raise real concerns:

certain website links lead from the classroom materials to websites containing sexually explicit images and information much of the program's content and discourse is too sophisticated for years 7 and 8 students, many of whom are still very immature in their development and outlook no qualified health professionals appear to have had any involvement in the program development there are suggestions in the materials that students undermine staff authority as they pursue school-based activism certain class activities require students to openly express affirmation, indifference or discomfort in response to 'hypothetical' personal life-choices about sexuality

Educational leaders have an obligation to ensure teaching materials are sound and appropriate for years 7 and 8 students including those who are LGBTI. It is no answer to say they will leave it to busy school staff to exercise their discretion about the suitability of a program on the hop, nor is it reasonable to expect busy parents to opt their children in or out of a program they will not have the time or means to become properly informed about.

On Tuesday 15 March Emeritus Professor Bill Loudon (UWA) briefed the Federal Minister for Education, Simon Birmingham, with his report on the program. A number of recommendations for changes were made but not that the program be scrapped. The report is not yet released.

I hope and pray that it is the children in the earmarked year groups who are uppermost in the minds of the relevant decision makers as the best way forward is determined with wisdom and discernment.

## Thank you!

My warmest thanks to the many CWLA members who have welcomed, assisted and encouraged me as I've settled into my new role as National Social Issues Convenor. I've been overwhelmed by the CWLA members' warmth and passion for those in need and their tireless commitment to their faith.



**Helen Freidman**

*National Social Issues Convenor*



Let us touch the dying, the poor, the lonely and the unwanted according to the graces we have received and let us not be ashamed or slow to do the humble work.

**- Mother Teresa**

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## WOMEN'S VOICE

Women's Voice is the Official Magazine of World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO). An annual subscription is \$22.00

League Members should contact their State International Secretaries if they would like to subscribe to Women's Voice.



# FROM THE BIOETHICS CONVENOR

Behold I am with you always; yes, to the end of time. Matthew 28:20

## **Presently, no United Nations treaty states that abortion is a human right.**

When abortion on demand is hailed as part of some international law or convention it is a lie. But it is also an intimidating tactic. The heavy handed suggestion that countries or states must keep up with abortion-permitting policies is heard frequently, even in the UN. Through arguments and rhetoric dressed as 'maternal health' abortion language can insert itself into our culture.

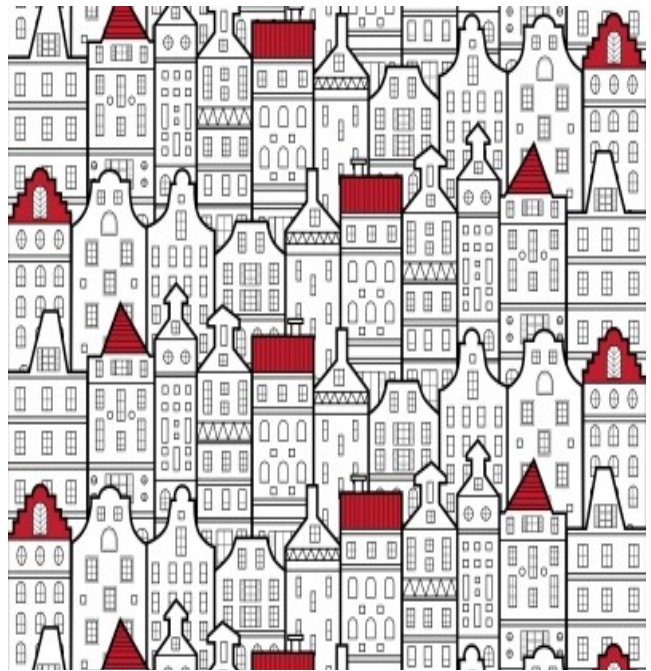
The UN is targeted with this language. In countries where abortion is not legal, lobby groups at the UN have declared such countries' legislation to be injurious to women's health. Furthermore, pro-abortion lobby groups have been working hard to have countries with this legislation regarded as 'unsafe abortion' providers. As such they would have a tarnished 'Sustainable Development' report card. Meeting Sustainable Development Goals is also being promoted as the gatekeeper for development spending.

Given this background battle to exalt abortion as a 'health benchmark', it is disappointing that a few pro-life groups recently succumbed to the language battle and accepted the phrase 'comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care services'. Sadly, pro-life attendees at the recent annual UN Commission on the Status of Women did not unite to prevent abortion slipping in under the guise of 'comprehensive ..reproductive health care services'. The subtleties of health care language are important to understand.

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'I am reminded of your sincere Faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your other Eunice' **2 Tim 1:5**

## **Euthanasia in the Netherlands and the Bioethics Professor who changed his mind**



Theo Boer, a Professor of Health Care Ethics, was appointed to the Dutch Government 'Regional Review Committee' on Euthanasia and was a euthanasia supporter—until recently. He had noted a 15% annual increase in 'assisted dying' with the figure more than doubling in the decade to 2014. He observed 'What was once considered a last resort now becomes a default mode of dying for an increasing number of people. He also observed that 'unbearable suffering' has now come to mean 'meaningless waiting'.

In addition, the reasons and categories of reasons for applying for doctor assisted death have spread out to include unpleasant situations, contexts and events. Professor Boer also noted that in 2003 there were 'hardly any' patients killed for dementia and mental health problems.

### **The Q&A 'Andrew Denton Show', like Netherlands documentaries, a glossy sweetened promotion of death.**

However, one in ten of the previous 500 cases he had reviewed had cited 'loneliness' as a reason for death, and others had merely 'age related complaints' and could have lived for decades. Other reasons given for being killed included blindness, autism and tinnitus. Couples elected to die together, sometimes when one was well.

Boer also noted the rise of the 'right' to be killed, and the rise of documentaries promoting euthanasia. These both feed into what he has seen and described as 'the duty to die', to spare relatives and friends the burden of care or of visiting them.

From these observations which he lists, professor Boer has changed his mind about euthanasia. He writes: the offer of assisted dying ...is purchased at the expense of signalling others that they should ask for euthanasia out of concern for their loved ones, not themselves...It conveys the message that death is a good remedy for suffering and not just physical suffering and not just the patients' suffering. Meanwhile, the European Parliament overwhelmingly defeated a measure to promote euthanasia. A declaration supporting euthanasia failed to get support .

During this Jubilee, the Church will be called even more to heal these wounds; to assuage them with the oil of consolation, to bind them with mercy and cure them with solidarity and vigilant care. Let us not fall into humiliating indifference...

**Misericordiae Vultus 15.**  
**Pope Francis**

### **The Catholic Church stands up against Belgium euthanasia; considers formalizing a policy of non co-operation.**



The new Catholic Archbishop of Brussels has emphasized the right of Catholic hospitals and aged care institutions to refuse to co-operate with euthanasia or abortion. The family of one woman, whose euthanasia doctor was denied admission to her Catholic nursing home facility, have taken the matter to court claiming their mother was psychologically harmed by the protection of her life.

Archbishop Josef De Kesel has placed Catholicism squarely in the path of euthanasia policy. Institutions in Belgium are not specifically protected by the freedom of conscience rule. This will be a test case for Belgium. The Catholic Church provides a substantial contribution to the health care sector in areas of Belgium. Since there has been formal co-operation with euthanasia in some instances, his reminder of absolute values will also challenge some institutions to remember who they are and what they stand for.

In the Netherlands currently 1 in 25 deaths is by euthanasia. A quarter of these are for diagnoses other than terminal disease, and 300 were non-voluntary. Suicide has risen 35% during the last 6 years.

To banish religious- based opinion from public debate would be tantamount to a 'secularist caliphate'

**- Archbishop Anthony Fisher**

## Euthanasia: an economic measure, with financial penalties for non-compliance...



The Co-chair of the Belgian Euthanasia Evaluation Commission has responded trying to whip up public opinion against the Church in Belgium, saying that it would be problematic if Catholic institutions rejected the 'right' to euthanasia. No such right is enshrined in Belgian law. The law is limited to non-criminalization of euthanasia-performing doctors. The 'right' to euthanasia is a social propaganda. However, after much indoctrination, it is seen as a right by the Belgian people. One of the main originators of Belgian euthanasia law, Professor Etienne Vermeersch, has already suggested that there is a 'community of money' form which Catholic Institutions should perhaps be removed. (De Morgen).

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He has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to His purpose which he set forth in Christ. His purpose he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, Things in heaven and things on earth. **Eph Ch 1.**

## Let us hear the words You spoke to the Samaritan Woman: 'if you knew the gift of God!'

Andrew Denton claimed authority on the basis that he had visited the Netherlands and interviewed influential people. Our tax-funded ABC thought we should all be impressed by that and organized no rebuttal within the hour they allocated his propaganda. Are Australians also being indoctrinated as in Belgium, and paying for it?

Vermeersch has tried to incite the Belgian people saying if hospitals refuse to co-operate some people may 'have to suffer pointlessly.. because no human hospital is nearby'. We will need to stand strongly against 'experts', propaganda-style documentaries and emotional invective.

### We pray:

Send Your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of mercy may be a year of Grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm may bring good news to the poor. Proclaim liberty to the captives and to the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception pray for us.



### Dr. Deirdre Little

National Bioethics Convenor

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## **The Commission On The Status Of Women: Pornography - New York 2016**

Pornography received considerable attention at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60) held in New York, in March. Interestingly it was negative attention. From Christian based groups to ultra liberal feminists there was agreement that pornography is harmful; that it is addictive; that it is damaging to women and very dangerous for children exposed to it.

The Swedish Women's Lobby Parallel Event spelled out in very strong language, that the monetizing of women's bodies in pornography is an aggressive act.

Dr. Gail Dines, author of the book, "Porn Land" stated that the average age boys view pornography is now 11 years old and descending. She described how young boys search for porn- they do not stumble across it- thinking they will see some flesh, but are actually exposed to graphic depictions of the degradation of women. They are so traumatized by the images, that they return to the source of the trauma to re-form it in their minds. Psychologists report children as young as 7 years being addicted to porn!

The link between the porn industry and banks, credit cards, hotels, travel agencies and other businesses, ensures its survival.

Clay Olsen from "Fight the New Drug", told the audience, at a United Families International Parallel Event' that the Porn Industry has links to the Sex Trafficking Industry. It has become one industry - the Sexual Exploitation Industry. One porn site alone received 87 billion visits last year! Remember that the world's population is 7 billion! According to Dr. Dines all the porn websites are owned by the one group, Mind Geek. The power they wield worldwide is truly diabolical.

Porn is addictive. Science is proving that. The chemicals released between neuro-connectors,

in the brain, can be hijacked. The brain becomes re-wired and needs more and more porn- with increasingly degrading content- to achieve the same pleasure. This is addiction. Since it is the frontal lobes, the decision-making centre of the brain, that is effected, control becomes increasingly difficult.

Female addiction is a growing problem. Clay Olsen stated that 30% of the people who approach his organisation for counselling and assistance are girls. He commented that we live in a different world; that this level of pornography has never been seen before. The nature of porn has changed too, becoming far more aggressive, violent and harmful. What was regarded as wicked one generation ago is now seen as tame and pathetic.

Porn users never see healthy relationships, 88% of porn is physically aggressive towards women. There are strong connections to prostitution. It is the fastest growing industry in the world.

Protecting our children from pornography will require greater vigilance and awareness on the part of parents. Its insidious tentacles reach into every facet of life, even our schools and sex education programs.



**Jane Munro**  
*National International Secretary*

# FROM FR. JOHN HERD NATIONAL CHAPLAIN



*Fr John Herd with Fr Natalino Gusmao and parishioners after Sunday Mass*

## Visit to Timor Leste

I am pleased to have the chance of visiting Timor Leste again. I first came in 1999 as the people were about to vote for independence. It was a crucial time, and a time which was dangerous. There were threats against the people that if they voted for independence there would be violent reprisals. I remember one brave woman saying at the time that the Timorese would vote for independence so that their children would live without fear as they had.

During my visit this time I went up to a parish in the hills where I had worked before. I was asked to speak with a group of young people. They are just starting a new youth group and wanted some inspiration. One of them told me that I had baptized him years ago. I spoke about developing talents and making good choices. I could have talked about their parents and grandparents who had chosen to risk so

much so that they could have a safe future.

In my visit this year I taught a class of 23 seminarians. I enjoyed the teaching and I think I gave a new perspective for them. I used English and Tetum in teaching, and I hope they understood most of it. I will find out after I give a test!

There are 103 seminarians for the country and there are many more who are preparing to enter the seminary. The students must pay \$50 per month, \$30 for tuition and \$20 for accommodation. Often the family is not able to afford this money. Many families have 7 or 8 children, and sometimes the father has died and the mother works to grow crops.

To be a priest in Timor is an important position as the country is over 90% Catholic. But there are new opportunities today. The population is estimated at 1.3 million and the average age is 18 years. Many young people want to study at university but often there is no paid work for them.



During my visit this year, I stayed with the Christian Brothers who welcomed me warmly. Yes, the welcome was warm but the weather was also warm and humid. The Christian Brothers, or Comunidade Edmund Rice, has a mission in the hills for five village schools. Two brothers work in the village schools and another brother, Br Barry, teaches English at the seminary.

I was pleased to meet Fr Natalino Gusmao again. Natalino visited Murray Bridge parish last year. I celebrated Mass with him at one of the churches in his parish. He has nine chapels and has Mass in some places once a month (similar to our experience).

I asked Natalino if there is something our parish can help with. He explained that he would like some money (\$2000) to construct a grotto for Our Lady. The young people could build it without



*Bishop of Dili, Virgilio do Carmo da Silva*

being paid, and it would be a good project to bring them to work together as a team.

**Fr. John Herd**  
National Chaplain



*Fr John with a class from the seminary in Dili*

**Never see a need without doing something about it.**



# FROM THE WUCWO BOARD MEMBER AUSTRALIA

World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) Asia Pacific Region is preparing for the Regional Conference which will be held in Suva, Fiji from 2-6 May, 2016.

The venue for the Conference, with CWL Fiji as hosts, will be the Novotel Lami Bay Hotel, Suva, Fiji. All accommodation is at this hotel as well. Registration for the Conference is \$US200 and accommodation is per night without breakfast \$FJ216 for a double deluxe room. Registrations close on 31 March, 2016.

Opening Mass will be celebrated on Sunday, 1 May by Chief Celebrant, Archbishop Peter Loy Chong. The program for the whole Conference is quite extensive with the daily Program consisting of a variety of Guest Speakers focusing on the Resolutions of WUCWO General Assembly held at Fatima, Portugal, 2014. There will be Workshops, with sufficient time to report back, as well as Reports from countries of the Region.

Asia Pacific Region is demographically the largest Region in the WUCWO organisation. The Region reaches from the Middle East to the Hawaiian Islands.

On Thursday we will visit a village and see some of the Island and meet with some young women of the area.

The conference concludes on Friday with Mass followed by Farewell Island Night and Feasting.

It is not too late to register, so please take this opportunity to meet with WUCWO President General, Maria Giovanna Ruggieri, as well as ladies from other countries at the Conference and also learn more about WUCWO.

Many have asked how we are able to help the

Fijian people. Well, by being there we will be helping the Fijians as you know they will be suffering as a result of Cyclone Winston for some considerable time into the future.

WUCWO DAY will be celebrated on 13 May, 2016. The Service has been prepared by the women of the Region of Europe. WUCWO Asia Pacific Region will have the honour to prepare the WUCWO DAY SERVICE in 2018.

This year of the Jubilee of Mercy, on celebrating WUCWO Day on 13 May, we aim to start raising money in a step towards our resolution about the 'right to have access to clean drinking water and sanitation'. WUCWO has already received some project proposals and we hope we can succeed in carrying out more than one project.

WUCWO rely on the generosity of spirit of our member organisations. In this Jubilee Year of Mercy we are asked to put into practice, more than ever before, the corporal works of mercy: "Give water to the thirsty" is on this list.



**Catherine V McGrath**

WUCWO V/P Asia Pacific Region  
WUCWO Board Member Australia