



CLRI
NSW



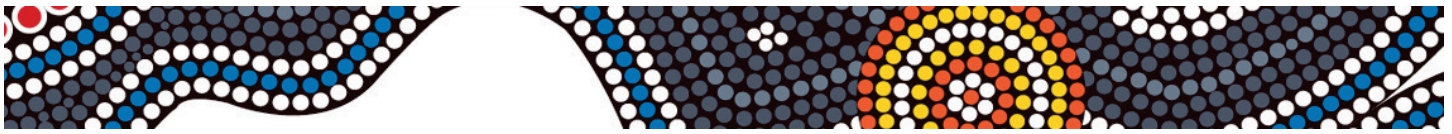
WHAT DOES A RE-IMAGINED AUSTRALIA LOOK LIKE?

The 2016-17 Budget failed to equitably allocate resources and wealth to all Australians. The Federal Government has focused on supporting businesses and wealthy individuals whilst offering little to no support to address issues related to environmental and social justice. This strategy paper offers a re-imagining of the Budget and provides vision for an Australian society that is centred on values of compassion, social justice and equitable opportunity for all.

VISIONS AND VALUES

1. Removal of systemic racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australian policy and culture. Collaborative partnerships to overcome health and education gaps and to eliminate disproportionate incarceration rates
2. Foreign development aid budget to be increased to at least 0.7% of gross national product (GNP), in accordance with a 1970 General Assembly Resolution
3. The prioritisation of environmental conservation over economic interests. Budget allocation to be sufficient enough to meet Australia's COP21 obligations and other environmental issues
4. A fair and affordable housing market for all Australians. Greater allocation of funding to affordable housing and homeless services programs
5. The rights of refugees and asylum seekers, as set out in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, are upheld. Refugees and asylum seekers to be welcomed and treated with dignity, respect and compassion





CLRI INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

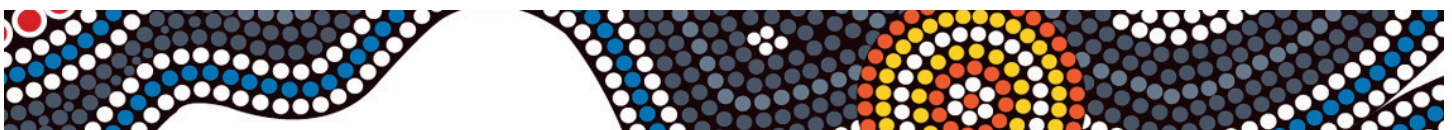
Let us look back with courage; see the truth and speak it.
Let us look around with compassion; see the cost and share it.
Let us look forward with hope; see what can be and create it.
Give us courage to face the truth;
Compassion to share the burden -
Strength to play our part in the healing -
And hope to walk forward to a place of justice.
With courage, compassion, strength and hope, we will walk together on the journey of healing.



- "A prayer for the journey of healing,
WA Reconciliation Inter-Faith Working Group

National Director of "ANTaR", Andrew Meehan, has described the 2016-17 budget as having failed "to address disadvantage" in the areas of Indigenous incarceration rates, child removal rates, and gaps in health and well-being. CLRI NSW suggests to:

- Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution and ensure the Constitution no longer permits racial discrimination by governments.
- Allocate adequate funding to the Aboriginal Legal Services and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services
- Reinstate funding for the national representative body, the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples
- Provide funding for new programs to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians



As followers of Christ, we are challenged to make a fundamental 'option for the poor' – to speak for the voiceless, to defend the defenceless, to impact on the poor.....As Christians, we are called to respond to the needs of all our brothers and sisters, but those with the greatest needs require the greatest response.

- Economic Justice For All, United States Catholic Bishops



The \$224 million worth of cuts to foreign aid in the 2016-17 budget means that Australia's bilateral aid contribution is now the lowest it has ever been (0.22% of GDP). As Catholics we have a moral obligation to care for poor and vulnerable people. CLRI NSW propose that the foreign aid budget be increased to at least 0.7% of GDP (in line with our previous international agreements). The foreign aid budget could eventually be increased to 1% of GDP, as proposed by the World Council of Churches in 1965.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

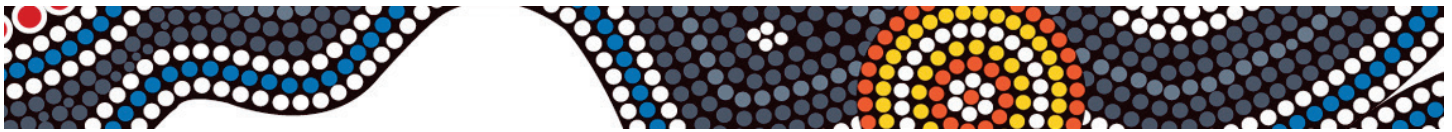
For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in"

- Matthew 25:35



The Catholic tradition of "welcoming a stranger" applies directly to how we should treat refugees and asylum seekers. Combining this tradition with the principles set out in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention provides a foundational platform on which fair and just Australian refugee policies can be built. These policies should include the following:

- An end to mandatory detention both offshore and onshore.
- Fair and robust refugee status determination. Asylum seekers should be given free access to legal advisors and translators. The determination process should be rapid.
- Asylum seekers living in Australia waiting for their status determination to be resolved should be able to work and access educational, medical and financial services
- On no basis should an asylum seeker be returned to the country from which they have fled persecution



ENVIRONMENT

I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si

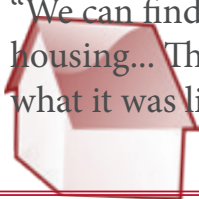


Our Catholic teachings charge us with stewardship of creation and our policies on the environment must reflect this care and respect for the earth. CLRI NSW proposes to:

- Set the renewable energy target to 100% reduction in all fossil fuel use by 2050.
- Commit to our COP21 obligations, in particular our commitment in assisting developing countries boost climate resilience and expand their renewable energies industry.
- Commit at least \$500 million (as proposed by the ALP) to improve water quality, combat invasive species, and modernise agricultural practices to protect the Great Barrier Reef.
- Redirect the \$7 billion allocated for fuel subsidies to clean energy projects.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

"We can find no social or moral justification, no justification whatsoever, for lack of housing... The son of God came into this world as a homeless person. The son of God knew what it was like without a roof over his head"



- Pope Francis addressing crowd in Washington, 2015

More than 105,000 people in Australia are currently sleeping rough, couch surfing or living in crisis and temporary accommodation. In 2015, at least 70% of low income earners were experiencing housing stress, where housing costs exceed 30% of income. CLRI NSW propose to:

- Adopt a multi-level national housing strategy which commits governments at all levels to increase the supply of affordable housing and to invest in programs that address homelessness
- Abolish negative gearing