

INFORM-ACTION

Newsletter of the Social Action Office - Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes Queensland

A Reflection on 20/20 Vision and 2020 – A Vision for Australia

20/20 Vision

20/20 Vision is a term to describe average eyesight/vision. In simple terms if you have 20/20 vision it means that from 20 feet away you can see what a person with average eyesight can see from a distance of 20 feet. If your eyesight is 20/10 then it is better than average as it means that at 20 feet you can see what a person with average sight can see at 10 feet. Conversely if you have 20/40 vision then it is below the average as the reader can work out for her/himself.

A U S T R A L I A

AUSTRALIA 2020

If we apply a similar measure to the Australia 2020 Summit - a vision for the future then surely our best outcome would be for at least a 20/10 vision. How much above the average view will the outcomes be? This question provides both challenge and opportunity for the Government but also for all Australians. The goal was to glean from our brightest and best (surely the above average) a vision for 2020.

While 1,000 Australians participated directly in the Summit there were 8,637 written submissions. A list of the rankings in order of the total number of submissions listed on the 2020 Summit website present one view of Australians' hope for the future:

Topic	Number of submissions	% of total (8637)
Sustainability	1322	15.31
Communities & Families	1139	13.19
Health	1095	12.68
Economy	1051	12.17
Productivity	905	10.48
Governance	775	8.97
Indigenous Australia	684	7.92
Australia's future in the world	608	7.04
Rural Australia	603	6.98
Creative Australia	455	5.27

From these 10 streams will come the vision for Australia in 2020. However, we know the "devil is in the detail" - the journey from words to action is often a long and vexatious path.

The Christian View

Our responsibility as citizens and as Christians is to view our vision of the future through a filter that gives greater weight to the needs of the poor, the marginalised and the broken and degraded earth. Jesus was not a 20/20 vision person. His vision of a new earth was not based on his hope for what society would be like in 10 years. His vision was that the new begins today when he preached that the kingdom of peace and justice had come. Our continuing role as followers of Jesus is to critique the outcomes of the 2020 Summit in the light of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching which have their inspiration in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Kathleen Tynan pbvm
SAO Coordinator

World Youth Day – A challenge and opportunity for transforming social realities with the power of the Gospel

As Catholic Youth from around the world gather we all need to keep before our eyes the call to Transformation that the Cross symbolises and encapsulates. *"Transforming social realities with the power of the Gospel, to which witness is borne by women and men faithful to Jesus Christ, has always been a challenge and it remains so today at the beginning of the third millennium of the Christian era."* [Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martin, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace]

World Youth Day is primarily an opportunity for evangelisation - to draw young people to a deep, life-changing experience of God. WYD08 is concerned with presenting a faith that is engaged in the practical Christian work of love, peace and justice - a faith which reflects the social teaching of the Church. Catholic Social Teaching's fundamental principles are concerned with:



(Continued on page 4)

Questioning the Costs of Too Little Too Late

Sitting here by the window in my lovely SAO office I am enjoying the warm weather - in a short sleeve t-shirt, aware of blue sky, sunshine, the green of the kentia palm trees next door, a butterfly wafting by and of thunderclouds gathering. It feels more like summer every day. Except that we are heading into winter!

On pleasant days like this it may be hard to connect the dots - it's only a few degrees warmer after all - to understand the silent unfolding climate emergency and the all out response required to prevent the worst of it. Perhaps we won't comprehend until we too are subject to nature's intensifying wrath - like those in the Irrawaddy delta of Burma - and the corals of our Great Barrier Reef are fully bleached. Dead.

Far too much space and power has been given over to the notion that the dollars and cents cost of putting in place the changes needed to stop global warming is too much for individuals, organisational budgets or even developed world economies to deal with. We need to thoroughly question such notions and understand the imperative that the cost of NOT doing everything we can now is wreaking havoc and will result in immeasurable costs - social, environmental, ethical, moral AND economic - for all of creation on the planet - and will do so for a very long time to come if we don't act comprehensively. I say immeasurable because even the most complex economic modelling is not sufficient to the task of telling us what even the economic cost of losing the Great Barrier Reef might be, let alone the other, non-monetised, costs.

We all know, intellectually, that trees take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen. This is primary school science. Yet, perhaps only when there is a price on the very air we breathe will we recognise and understand (pray not too late) the part forests play in the complex and intricate web of life - something that Indigenous peoples, still connected to country, deeply understand.

At the recent Climate Action Network Australia (CANA) gathering in Sydney which heard the latest science (see page 3) updates on the Garnaut Review's thinking about carbon budgets and emissions trading schemes (based on the science and economics) and about the need for command and control regimes (think Winston Churchill's *Fight them on the beaches* speech in WWII), it was words from Greens Senator Christine Milne and researcher Sivan Katha's presentation on development rights which really hit home.

Milne pointed out that George Bush and the 'Coalition of the Willing' didn't ask how much it would cost to invade Iraq (\$3 trillion and counting - enough to retrofit

the planet, fast track new renewable technologies and switch to true sustainable agriculture as well as a host of other projects) - they just went ahead and invaded. If there is political will there is a way and the cost doesn't even come into it.

Milne also spoke positively - about communicating what we can achieve and retrieve with transitioning to low/no carbon futures - our health (both physical and mental - through walking, organic food and community), new industries (booming clever tech industries), new jobs and a new future. But we also need to understand and take action against the very drastic threats versus the positive future that responsible control of the climate and government controls can deliver.



Like J F Kennedy and the dream of putting a person on the moon with the Apollo missions, we need to draw the vision in the people's imagination. We have to tell people and our politicians a different story - that the new world (we envision) actually solves the problems we have and that we want to rush towards a better future ... one where we have time, communities, families, urban villages and rapid transit.

"Our survival depends on a solidarity with the poor"

This closing statement from ecological thinker Sivan Katha from the Stockholm Environment Institute, who is advocating a development rights approach to carbon equity, encapsulates for me both the path to a post carbon future and the foundation spirituality of the SAO, with its vision of God's transformative dream for all creation. In this transformative dream there is no separation of self and other and ultimately no insulating ourselves from the problems we create. So when we eat, shop, move from A to B (to work and for events and holidays), invest for the future, power our activities and house ourselves, we need to ask "Does this action support the planet's sustainability so that the planet that supports us also supports the poor?" Sustainability then becomes a deep ecological, spiritual practice for all our days.

Angela Ballard
SAO Project Officer

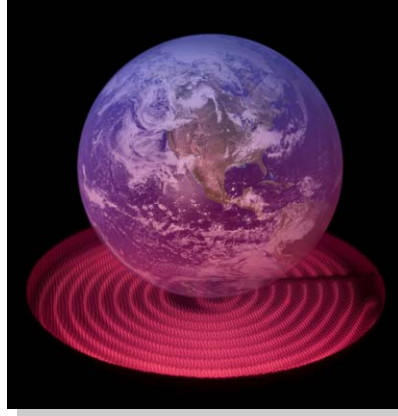
We need to thoroughly ... understand the imperative that the cost of NOT doing everything we can now is wreaking havoc and will result in immeasurable costs

Updated Science Briefing

– from Professor David Karoly, IPCC Lead Author

The IPCC 4th report released last year did not include any research post-2005, so it is, in many respects, already out of date because analysis of recent observed changes, compared to projections, are not included. The best estimates in that report are no longer the most likely outcomes.

One example of this is sea level change related to Arctic and Greenland ice sheet melting. There has been a 20% drop in ice cover in the 2 years since 2005! This suggests a substantial acceleration of warming so the previous high-end IPCC projections of 19-50 cm this century are now the low-end projections; 50-130 cm by 2100 are the most recent high-end projections.



This marked shift in projections is being seen in the key indicators. All variables are now at or above the highest estimates given by the IPCC 4th assessment. For GHGs we have passed the 455 ppm CO₂ equivalent scenario which puts us into the realm of dangerous climate change now. The highest emission projections and scenarios are now considered too low.

To stabilise below the present day as quickly as possible to prevent mass extinctions and non linear (runaway) climate change - which means keeping increases in temperatures to 2-2.4° even though we are already at .8° with a further 1.3° in the system still to come - will require up to 97% reductions and "anthropogenic (human-made) sequestration" as well as no further emissions.

The oceans are acidifying and the high diversity

ecosystems such as coral reefs are the early casualties. While only 2% of the ocean surface reef systems account for 25% of marine species, 100 million people subsist on reef ecosystems - not to mention the billions of dollars in tourism industries here and abroad. We have lost 10% of the Great Barrier Reef already and there is a 20% drop in calcification.

Such changes are occurring at 100 times the rate of previous ice age shifts so biology and evolution cannot keep up. If we cannot quickly stabilise below the 450 ppm CO₂ scenario the reef ecosystems are lost.

A question from the floor asked about natural processes that sequester. Prof David Karoly responded by saying that the positive feedbacks (which equate to negative impacts) are dominating the possible negative feedbacks (positive impacts) such as increases in high altitude vegetation and forests as things warm.

Scientific observations suggest there is a danger that the natural carbon sinks of remaining forests and the oceans will themselves become carbon sources. This is what is known as a tipping point.

If congregations would like a full briefing on the climate emergency and the real level of response required to avert unmitigated global disaster (for possibly hundreds of years to come, please contact Angela on (07) 3981 5866. Another future IS possible ... if we ACT NOW and race to decarbonise.

(P.S. This was a low-carbon update - I took the train to Sydney, enjoyed the scenery and caught up on some reading.)

Angela Ballard
SAO Project Officer

Review – ABC's Catalyst Program

Investing in bold futures - Microgen

On 22 May *Catalyst* reported on the small city of Woking in the UK where a city engineer has achieved massive cuts to grid based energy use (and therefore energy bills and carbon emissions from large scale energy and distribution systems that waste energy) by establishing microscale co-generation and tri-generation. UK Microgen tells the story of how the installation of CHP combined heat and power - off the shelf technologies that date back to the early days of electricity - supported by solar PV has resulted in Woking producing 80% of its own power. In just 10 years it cut its CO₂ emissions by 77%! Now Allan Jones has been given the task of repeating that success in London, a city 75 times the size of Woking and one prone to climate related devastation from rising sea levels. A target of 60% by 2025 cuts to CO₂ has been

laid down by the Mayor of London with 20% of all new developments powered by off-grid, renewable or decentralised energy.

Tri-generation is combined heat and power with a twist that's crucial for Australia. Heat from co-generation is harnessed and captured to heat the building, and then converted into cold water that runs all the air conditioning. Another amazing microgen initiative uses organic waste, from restaurants, hospitals and schools. This waste, transformed into biogas to use in micro CHP generation units, represents any city's largest untapped renewable energy source. The organic waste of London could power half the residences of that huge city. Another future is possible so let's do what we need to ensure it. Go to <http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/2244790.htm> to read the transcript or download the Vodcast.

(Continued from page 1)

- The dignity of the human person and human rights
- The common good
- Subsidiarity
- Solidarity
- Stewardship of creation.



The question arises as to how the WYD events will engage young people in reflection on Christian faith that is engaged in practical Christian works of love, peace and justice.

Some areas where this opportunity is offered include:

Each Diocese has been asked to organise a day of service so that young people are engaged in works of social service. This will involve working through agencies such as Caritas, Pax Christi, Diocesan Justice and Peace Commissions, St Vincent de Paul, Catholic Earthcare and YCW (Young Christian Workers).

A Pilgrim Partnership Support Program is supporting pilgrims attending from poorer countries, particularly from our neighbouring regions throughout Oceania.

An Indigenous Advisory Committee is working on various ways of engaging young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in WYD08 and highlighting issues such as social alienation and dispossession, as well as the positive values Indigenous culture offers as an alternative to consumerism and individualism.

It is difficult to see how environmental concerns can be overcome when so many are travelling such long distances by plane. Possibly future WYDs will be different in organisation and format. Pope John Paul II, the founder of the World Youth Days, highlighted environmental concerns in many of his works, "Care for the environment represents a challenge for all of humanity. It is a matter of common and universal duty, that of respecting a common good..." *Centesimus Annus*

Source: http://www.wyd2008.org/index.php/en/about_wyd08/corporate_profile/social_justice

A story is told of a pilgrim who asks the teacher how does he/she maintain the warmth and glow that he/she feels in the gathering after the pilgrims disperse and go their separate ways. The teacher's response was - "You must carry the light within you."

The enduring results of WYD08 will be seen in how the people whose lives have been touched by WYD08 and surrounding events, especially youth, have integrated the image of the Cross as a symbol of faith, love, peace and reconciliation and carry the light within them.

Kathleen Tynan pbvm
SAO Coordinator

For Your Calendar

June

- 3 Mabo Day - High Court Decision in Mabo Case 1992
- 4 International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
- 5 World Environment Day
- 10 Myall Creek Massacre 1838
- 11 Racial Discrimination Act ratified as part of Australian Law 1975
- 12 World Day Against Child Labour
- 14 Australia's first National Whale Day
- 17 International Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- 20 UN World Refugee Day
- 26 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
- 29 Jubilee Sunday (Drop the Debt)
- 30 Closure of ATSI Regional Councils 2005

July

- 6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday
- 6-13 NAIDOC Week - Theme for 2008: *Advance Australia Fair?*
- 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags recognised as official Australian flags
- 15 World Youth Day - Sydney
- 15-20 World Youth Day Events
- 16 First Atomic Bomb denoted in New Mexico 1945

August

- 6 Hiroshima Day 1945
- 9 International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples
- 12 International Youth Day
- 15 End of World War II in the Pacific
- 15 Feast of the Assumption
- 23 International Day to commemorate the Abolition of the Slave Trade
- 26 *MV Tampa* rescued 433 asylum seekers from a sinking vessel. The Australian Government refused entry to its shores.
- 30 East Timor's Independence Ballot - 78.5% of East Timorese voted for independence

Essential for Stolen Generations Healing Process

In a Media Statement issued on Sorry Day 26 May the National Sorry Day Committee reminded us that 26 May 2008 was the 10th Anniversary of Sorry Day and it is eleven years since the tabling of the *Bringing them home* Report. The Parliament's Apology initiated a great opportunity to put things right, after years of negligence and neglect by the Howard Government. Prime Minister Rudd and Minister Macklin have stated on numerous occasions that they are going to do it differently; Australia is waiting for them to prove that they have more to offer than a symbolic gesture.

