

How will this work actually be implemented when a viable and well established regional network has been removed and replaced by nominated police officers?

(more information can be found on [www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au))

JUDITH-ANN SJOSTEDT - National Social Justice Convenor



### DATES TO REMEMBER

July 15—20      World Youth Day 2008 - Sydney

July              ACW Fellowship Day Service  
(Contact your State Unit for details)

September 7      Fathers Day

# Australian Church Women National News

Produced by  
National Executive  
July—September 2008



*'Faith in the Future'*

## Mission Statement

Australian Church Women seeks to unite Christian Women across denominational boundaries to promote peace, understanding and unity through faith and love in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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### Presidents' Greeting

Dear Friends

My thoughts and prayers are with those of you I know have been on the sick list at this time. It is sometimes difficult to throw off the winter ills, and I pray you will all make a quick and complete recovery. May the healing hand of God be with you.



I thank both Leeola in WA and Helen in NSW who attended functions on my behalf. It is impossible for me to attend all the occasions to which I am invited as your National President and I appreciate the help of interstate members very much. The National Executive was pleased to receive a report from both Leeola and Helen at our recent meeting.

Plans for the Conference in September 2009 are going along well. You will all hear details in due course.

June 22 was the Anniversary of the Uniting Church in Australia. 31 years young! We rejoice with all those who have been part of this exciting development for many years. There is a whole generation of people who have never known any other church! A generation who wonder what we mean when we talk of differences between Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian! We pray that ACW may be a shining light to all to show that really we are Christians and not concerned about denominational differences.

A prayer for all of us this day:

Loving and merciful God, you care for your people and all your children are precious in your sight. We pray for all the family of nations. We pray for all those whose lives are torn apart by disaster and war, for all those worn out by disease, floods, drought or famine. We pray for peace and good will among all peoples.

Loving God help us daily to grow into your likeness.

With Christian love

Jean Thomson



**Executive Secretary  
International  
Committee of the  
Fellowship of the Least Coin  
Corazon Tabing—Reyes**

Corazon Tabing-Reyes, Cora to friends, is from the Philippines. Aside from being a wife of a pastor, mother of three, and grandmother of one, she is a Christian educator (deaconess) of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. She became a licentiate pastor but decided to go back to Christian education.

Cora now serves as the Executive Secretary of the International Committee for the Fellowship of the Least Coin since January 2008. She comes with a long experience of ecumenical involvement starting in 1976 when she worked as faculty member of Union Theological Seminary in the field of Theological Education by Extension and Christian Education. After her 16 years of teaching, she moved to the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and served as Executive Director for the Commission on Christian Education for 7 years. Then she was appointed as Executive Secretary for Women Concerns and Education Desks of the Christian Conference of Asia, which became Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment, and served there for 8 years.

Cora believes in the value of praying for justice, peace and reconciliation and in living this prayer through concretely offering a least coin after every prayer. She has learned from the practice of the foremothers, aunts and sisters of FLC that the prayers and the least coins when gathered are miraculous in serving the needy and the least of our world. All for the glory of God!

**ACW National Executive would like to thank Corazon for this profile and assure her of our continued prayer support.**

**Fellowship of the Least Coin news from Tasmania State Unit.**

We were very excited to receive an FLC grant last year for financial assistance for the Rainbows program in primary schools.

As a director of the Launceston City Mission and a friend of the Rainbows Facilitator Miss Hilary Fraser I knew first hand of the great need for the program to continue.

I was both thrilled and honoured to have the support of fellow executive members when I brought the suggestion forward to apply for a grant.

I invited three guests to the afternoon session of our State AGM on May 26<sup>th</sup>. All were associated with the Launceston City Mission. One of the speakers was Hilary who brought us up to date with Rainbows. It is quite evident that the grant enabled the purchase of materials for nearly two years. This is a great relief to both the Mission and the schools where the program is run.

Hilary shared with us last year the need for certain material to assist children who suffer the trauma of family member suicide. Hilary who likes the children to help themselves somewhat through reading has searched high and low for any books on the subject.

In desperation she decided to go into writing such a book based on the sessions and eventual conversations she has had with children of all ages over the years relating to their questions as to "why it happened and were they in any way to blame"? The book is written for ages 5 to 7, 8 to 10 and 11 to 12. Stories based on real life and in children's language used daily and designed for the understanding of each of the age groups.

Hilary, an artist herself, felt she wanted something a little better and approached a well known artist and friend to help out by bringing the book to life with her illustrations.

At the meeting Hilary had the proofs and read us a story which was both touching to her and in turn to us. The creation and publication of this book has touched the hearts of many so the high expense has been met by very generous donors.

It is hoped by the National Rainbows Facilitator that the book will be used in all states and give relief and answers to hundreds of children. The title is "Where Is He? I miss him so much"

We are immensely proud of what has happened and where God has led this particular recipient of a FLC Grant.

Juanita Miller Tas. FLC. Convener

**World Youth Day** is the largest youth event in the world and will be held in Sydney from Tuesday 15 to Sunday 20 July 2008.

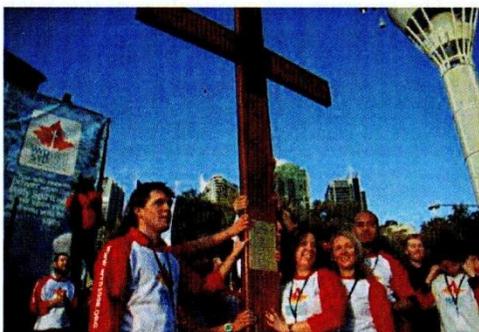
Organised by the Catholic Church, World Youth Day brings together young people from around the globe to celebrate and learn about their faith on a more regular basis.

Sydney was announced as the host city for the 23rd World Youth Day at the conclusion of the last international World Youth Day in Cologne Germany in August 2005.

World Youth Day 2008 will be the largest event Australia has ever hosted. It will attract over 125,000 international visitors—more than the 2000 Olympics.

World Youth Day 2008 will mark the first visit of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to Australia and we look forward to welcoming him to the *Great South Land of the Holy Spirit*.

Through the World Youth Day 2008 experience, young people from throughout the world will make a pilgrimage in faith, meet, and experience the love of God.



### **World Youth Day Cross and Icon.**

The most recognisable symbols of World Youth Day are the World Youth Day Cross and Icon. The World Youth Day cross is a 3.8 metre by 1.75 metre wooden cross weighing 31 kilograms and the companion Icon of Our Lady is a copy of the painting of Salus Populi Romani (Protectress of the Roman people).



Indigenous themes, symbols and colours will permeate World Youth Day 2008 events and allow our visitors to experience the wonderful culture and history of Australia's Indigenous.

To encourage participation and extend an appropriate welcome, an Indigenous message stick from the Sydney community has accompanied the World Youth Day Cross and Icon of Our Lady in their journey around Australia, inviting young indigenous people to Sydney for the event.

### **Smile awhile...**

Arthur is 90 years old. He's played golf everyday since his retirement 25 years ago. One day he arrives home looking downcast.

'That's it' he tells his wife. 'I'm giving up golf. My eyesight has got so bad...once I've hit the ball, I can't see where it went.'

His wife sympathises, and makes him a cup of coffee.

As they sit down she says, 'Why don't you take my brother with you, and give it one more try.'

'That's no good' sighs Arthur. 'Your brother is 103. He can't help'

'He may be 103 but his eyesight is perfect' says Arthur's wife.

So the next day Arthur heads off to the golf course with his brother-in-law. He tees up, swings and squints down the fairway.

He turns to the brother-in-law. 'Did you see the ball?'

'Of course I did'.

'Where did it go?' asks Arthur.

'I can't remember.'

## Prayers for Reconciliation

Recognising the significance of Sorry Day, following the recent National Apology to the Stolen Generations and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Catholic Bishops called for all Australians to renew their commitment to reconciliation.

In the lead up to Sorry Day (26 May), the Bishops' Commission for relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders said that the Apology *'was the culmination of many calls to acknowledge the harm done to Australian Indigenous people, not only at the time of white settlement, but through a prolonged lack of respect for Aboriginal people, including the removal of children from their parents – the Stolen Generation.'*

*'Aboriginal and Islander people believe that the truth has finally been acknowledged, allowing them to experience an equality, a dignity and an acceptance in their own land. The hope of all Australians is surely that the Prime Minister's apology and this annual Sorry Day, will translate into a continuing process of cultural respect and acceptance for all the peoples who make up the Australian nation.'*

The Bishops' Commission said that, *'For the Christian community, the words of Jesus are a challenge to us all: "by this shall all know that you are my disciples, if you have love, one for another" (Jn 13:35). There is no room for racism or discrimination; there is only a call to harmony through mutual respect and a future based on hope.'*

The following evening, Professor Lowitja O'Donoghue delivered her Reconciliation Week address in St Peter's Anglican Cathedral in Adelaide. In this, her final public address, she called on Christians to continue to work for justice and reconciliation.

Professor O'Donoghue said, *'Reconciliation Week is always, in part, a celebration. It celebrates the belief in the fundamental equality of all human beings. And, stemming from this belief is a world view about how human beings should be treated.'*

*'For me, this is the most simple and yet profound message of Christianity ... I reflect about the consequences when this belief is abandoned. And of course it has been abandoned in the treatment of Aboriginal people.'*

Professor O'Donoghue recalled the involvement of the churches in the

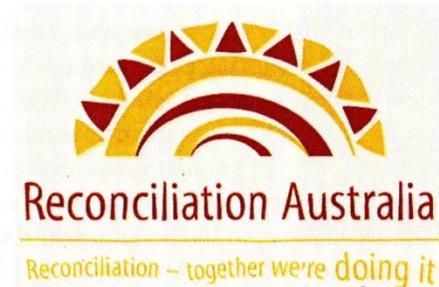
removal of children under government policy of forced separation. She noted the formal apologies of the churches for their part under the policy. *'Of course, the Australian churches have done much more than just apologise. They have been active partners in the Reconciliation movement.'* Noting the work of church agencies in a broad range of areas including welfare, education and advocacy, she said that *'through work like this, the churches and other agencies have recognised that it is now time to move on, beyond Sorry, and to focus on the journey of healing and justice.'*

Looking at the many unimplemented recommendations of the 'Bringing The Home' Report, and the need to act on these, she said that the Australian community needs to develop *'a genuine mindset that sees the rights of Aboriginal people as being as important as the rights of anyone else. This means that where rights have been taken away and where damages have been done, reparations need to be made. This is a basic principle of law and yet largely, it has not applied to Aboriginal people generally, or to the Stolen Generations in particular.'*

Regarding the programs currently being implemented in remote Indigenous communities, the Professor emphasised that these needed to be *'driven by a human rights perspective'*.

*'As I have said for many years, it is not about short term programs and quick fixes. It is about sustainable ongoing solutions that are negotiated with each community. And it is about putting in appropriate people and resources for the long haul.'*

*(This article appeared in the ACSJC Briefing June 2008 and is used here with permission of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council)*



## Women making a Difference

Eulogy at the memorial service for Dr Marika  
Yirrkala, NT  
15 June 2008  
By Jenny Macklin MP

I would like to acknowledge the traditional lands of the Rirratjingu people. I also want to convey the Prime Minister's condolences.

Dr Marika, a Rirratjingu woman from Yirrkala, was very much her father's daughter. Roy Marika taught his daughter community and culture; he taught her how to hunt and from him she learned a deep sense of justice and compassion.

Dr Marika's father was one of the Yolngu men who travelled from Arnhem Land to Canberra in 1963 to present the Yirrkala petitions. Their appeal was refused. But the bark petitions are still displayed in Parliament House for all to see.

When her father set out from Yirrkala, Dr Marika was just a little girl. I wonder at the impact this had on a five year old child. And I wonder if his journey, in some part, set her life's course.

Dr Marika will be remembered by many people across many cultures.

Her unique, free-ranging intellect encompassed her own Yolngu culture and mainstream Australia.

Her enthusiasm and ability to live and thrive in both cultures was an extraordinary example to all of us.

She brought breathtaking insight to her mission.

She said that the confluence of the two cultures was quite simply 'where the salt water coming in from the sea meets the stream of fresh water coming down from the land'

It was her unshakeable belief that both cultures could and should be lived and nurtured in a way that preserved and respected each of them.

Dr Marika was an exceptional linguist and teacher. With her colleague Mandawuy Yunupingu, she was instrumental in developing the Yolngu curriculum.

Education, both her own and that of others, was always a driving force.

Always restless to learn, to analyse, to listen, to teach, she gained a post-graduate certificate in education from the University of Melbourne.

A true intellectual she was always generous with her knowledge, always eagerly passing it on - through conversation, publication and discussion. And always leavened with humour and enlivened with her warmth. Her warm embrace which I can still feel.

She believed that her knowledge of her beloved culture was a gift to all Australians...and it was.

Dr Marika's academic abilities were recognised with an Honorary Doctorate from the Charles Darwin University and her appointment as a Senior Fellow.

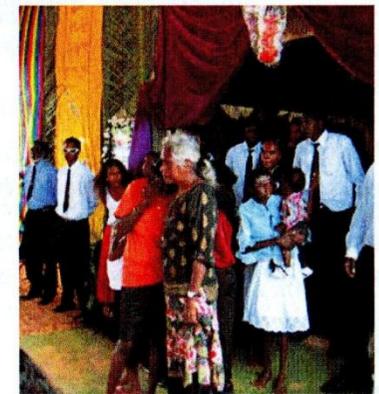
She was immersed in her culture, but happily adopted others. I'm told that one of her western cultural passions was Elvis Presley and that once she squeezed in a quick visit to that famous Elvis shrine - Gracelands. She travelled widely. She brought her passion for the Yolngu culture and her vision for a reconciled and harmonious Australia south to Canberra.

Seven years ago, she became a member of the Council of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and her tireless work for reconciliation was recognised when she was appointed to the board of Reconciliation Australia.

Her remarkable achievements were acknowledged when she was named 2006 Northern Territorian of the Year, and last year's NT Australian of the Year.

Her death just six weeks short of her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday was a sad and sudden loss to all of us.

To her people, her family, her many friends, students and colleagues. And a sad loss to all those Australians who believe, as Dr Marika did, that our two cultures can merge and blend and grow stronger just as 'the salt water coming in from the sea meets the stream of fresh water coming down from the land'.



Family—Memorial Service

## WKS Report

Constance Aronsen (National WKS Convenor) received the following letter from Imelda Aquino (WKS Scholar 2008):

*This goes with my love and prayers.  
Hoping all is well with you and your families.*

*I'm back at APTS after 2 weeks of ministry down south of the Philippines. It was supposed to be a vacation with friends from Dubai but we ended up doing Bible studies for their large family. But I enjoyed it nevertheless.*

*Please pray for God's direction as I plan to go back to the Middle East after APTS. Dubai had invited me to go back and help them start a Mission school. However, I think I need to do my Arabic language study before anything else. When I was there I saw the need to learn the language for a meaningful and fruitful relationship with the locals. And it was a bit frustrating not to be able to build meaningful relationship because of language barrier. As a result my ministry was confined to the Filipinos (Filipino workers) and other English speaking churches.*

*With that I am planning to go to Jordan for my Arabic language study. This is where the best Arabic language school is and where a classmate from IIS (Institute for Islamic Studies) did her language study. Also I am praying for an AG Church where I can possibly work while doing my language study.*

*Please pray for me that I may hear His voice and direction as I raise my funds for one year language study and let there be a strong sense of His presence in all this process.*

*Thank you and please inform me if there is anything that I need to pray about you guys specifically.*

*In His service*

*Imelda (IMEE)*

## 'YOU ARE MY BELOVED'

*God loves you and has chosen you as His own...God made peace with you, and now He lets you stand in His presence.*

*Colossians 3:12, 1:22 CEV)*

But wait there's more!

'He lets you stand in His presence as people who are holy—and faultless—innocent'.

We are not chosen because we are great;

We are not holy because we act like it.

We are not beloved because we have earned it.

God is the one to choose, to call, to sanctify, to grace us.

**Nothing** that we do, no matter how wonderful we are...will change one whit how God feels about us!

God will not love us any more or favour us with any greater blessings if we pour out our lives for Him, for He already loves us infinitely.

As a consequence we worship God.

(Marva Dawn 1999)

'The world says:

I love you **if** you are good looking, intelligent and wealthy.

I love you **if** you have a good education, a good job and good connections.

I love you **if** you produce much, sell much and buy much.

There are endless hidden '**ifs**' hidden in the world's love.

I am the prodigal son every time I search for unconditional love where it cannot be found. But the Father is always looking for me with outstretched arms to receive me back and whisper again in my ear: 'You are my beloved, on you my favour rests'

(Henri Nouwen 1994)

**He has chosen you...and lets you stand in His presence!**

## Australian Women's Coalition

I travelled to Broken Hill last week for the annual 'face to face' meeting of the four womens' secretariats with the Office for Women. It was a most interesting meeting, enabling me to learn something more of the work of the other three secretariats - WomenSpeak Network, Security 4r Women and the National Rural Women's Coalition. These groups, together with the Australian Women's Coalition of which ACW is a member form the network of organisations with which the Office for Women regularly consults. I found it most interesting to hear something of the work of the other three groups. The NRWC has recently completed a survey and put out a booklet on maternal health in Rural, and remote Australia. I hope that this information flows through to the health departments, both State and Federal, who obviously have most to do with the delivery of health services to all Australians.

The AWC has decided to employ a consultant to complete the work on the major project for 2008 - the consideration of the health and financial well-being as well as the social inclusion of women as they age. ACW members responded very well to the questionnaire on social inclusion I sent out to all State Units earlier in the year, and I thank you all. Please understand that we (members of AWC) are often given a very short time in which to send in a response to topics raised or questions asked by the Office for Women and we just need to do our best.

Jean Thomson - delegate to AWC

### WA ACT Unit Member receives Commendation

Congratulations to Kay Lockley (ACW WA Unit) and husband Robert, foster carers who have been commended for their long service by the WA Department of Child Protection.

*"They became registered foster carers with the Dept in January 1968. At that time they had already been providing care to three Aboriginal children for many years.*

*"During their 40 years of service the Lockleys have cared for more than 70 children, and have maintained contact with many of them."*

*"At a morning tea in their honour hosted by the Department's Fremantle office, District Director David Harrison said that Mr and Mrs Lockley were fantastic role models for the community. They are a couple who believe that fostering is something that they just do, and that is part of being in a community and contributing [to] the community."*

## Social Justice Report

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The NSW Premier recently announced major changes in the Government's response to violence against women with the abolition of its Violence Against Women Specialist Unit of 6 staff and 18 regional violence prevention worker positions.

In its place a Violence Prevention Coordination Unit (NOTE: violence against women IS NOT explicitly stated in its title) of 3 staff will be located in NSW Office of Women charged with developing a policy framework for addressing domestic and family violence. Nine NSW Police will facilitate local integrated domestic and family violence service delivery.

The systems and structures in society which support woman-abusing attitude and behaviours must be challenged if we are serious about eliminating violence against women.

Community concerns raised re these changes include:-

- . the shift from a broad government response to violence against women to a more narrow focus on domestic and family violence.
- . the loss of regional workers who facilitated local integration and supported local initiatives.
- . the loss of connection between regional staff and the central unit.
- . the loss of focus on prevention.

Associate Professor of Social Sciences and Criminology at the University of Western Sydney, Moira Carmody, says "it is very depressing to see that the government has not learnt anything from the world-class work being done across NSW by the Regional Violence Prevention Specialists. The new structure abolishes these positions and fails to grasp that primary prevention work is a key component of their work and combating violence against women".