



Indigenous MAKE POVERTY HISTORY.

MIPH Newsletter

27th May 2009

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NATSIEC Statement for Reconciliation Week

Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye with never a thought for the plank in your own? Luke 6:41-42

"The theme for National Reconciliation Week "see the person not the stereotype" is also relevant to Christians as we start the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation," Executive Secretary of NATSIEC Mr Graeme Mundine said today.



MIPH is an initiative of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) which is a commission of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).

"Reconciliation has two parts, first there is an acknowledgement that something is out of balance; an acknowledgement of sorrow and wrongs. The second part is to take action to make amends. We have seen significant actions in the past two years which have helped Australia move to a better understanding and acknowledgement of the pain and suffering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Actions such as the apology to the Stolen Generations, the Statement of Intent on health; even the flawed Northern Territory Intervention are all concrete steps towards reconciliation.

"As we celebrate these actions we must not lose sight of the fact that reconciliation is not only a political issue and is not something that the Government alone must instigate and act on. Certainly, they must show leadership and be proactive, but it is much more than that. If reconciliation is only addressed at a policy or issue level it loses depth and meaning and will not last," Mr Mundine said.

Quick Links...

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"True and lasting reconciliation will only come from a sustained change of heart at all levels of our community. One way we can come to a change of heart is to focus less on the specks in the eyes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and more on the planks in our own eyes.

"How often do we blame Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for their poverty, for the dysfunction that is too often evident in our communities; rather than asking ourselves, as individuals and as a society, how have we benefited from keeping Aborigines at the bottom of the pile? Can we honestly say that we have stared at the plank in our own eye; that we have wrestled with our own conscience; that we have taken actions in our own lives to open our hearts to true and lasting reconciliation? Until we do so we will not be reconciled," Mr Mundine concluded.

Week of Prayer for Reconciliation

It's not too late to get your resources for The Week of Prayer for Reconciliation (27th May to June 3rd).

NATSIEC has produced two resources for the week of Prayer for Reconciliation. An order of service which congregations can adapt for their own use during this week as well as a booklet with prayers readings and reflections for each of the days. These are available from our website at www.ncca.org.au/natsiec

In Conversation

What does "Reconciliation mean?" What are the Challenges for Australia in

NATSIEC Forum on the NT Intervention

From June 1st - 4th, NATSIEC is hosting a forum of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people representing the member Churches of NATSIEC and other representative groups. We are meeting in Sydney to discuss the NT Intervention, and to develop a coordinated response and plan for further action. Stay tuned...

Website woes!

Our apologies if you have experienced problems linking to pages on our website from this newsletter.

Several of our pages became corrupt in recent weeks and (amongst other inexplicable and annoying actions) kept dropping links.

We have tried to fix the problems as they arise, but if you have any further problems please let us know.

And on the plus side!

The NCCA is currently upgrading its website, so we will have new and improved pages very soon and we will take this opportunity to update the content.

Over the next two months, or so, the website will be pared back as we remove items in preparation

working towards reconciliation. If you are interested in these questions perhaps our new series of video conversations will interest you. Graeme Mundine (Executive Secretary of NATSIEC) and Rev. Dr. Jonathan Inkipin (General Secretary of NSW Ecumenical Council) sit down and grapple with these issues. [Click here](#) to watch.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - In Conversation

Graeme Mundine and Jonathan Inkipin are "In Conversation" about Ezekiel 37. Jonathan and Graeme discuss unity as opposed to uniformity; diversity not sameness. They relate the reading to an Aboriginal understanding of land and themselves as a people. Jonathan and Graeme also talk about nation building and racism and what can be learnt from an Aboriginal knowledge of the Spirit. [Click here](#) to watch.

These videos can also be watched from YouTube - just search for NATSIEC.

Life Expectancy Gaps

As we highlighted a few weeks ago, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) have, this week, released new figures about the life expectancy gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This has occurred to allow for the under identification of Indigenous deaths.

When reading these numbers it is important to note that this is a change of methodology and comparisons can not be made with previous life expectancy gaps. The new life expectancy gap does not arise from any recent policy initiatives and the impetus to reduce the gap remains as urgent as ever. Whether we are talking about a gap of 17 years or 11 years, it is clearly not acceptable.

Key features:

Life expectancy for Indigenous males is 67 years which is approximately 11 years less than non-Indigenous males. For Indigenous females, life expectancy is 73 which is approximately 10 years less than for non-Indigenous women.

The life expectancy gaps are also dependent on location and vary between States. For example, the life expectancy gap for men in the NT and WA is 14 years whereas in NSW it is 9 years.

Another point of great concern that this data highlights is the difference in mortality rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. **Between the ages of 35 and 44 mortality rates for Indigenous men are five times higher than for non-Indigenous men. For women the mortality rate is five times higher in the 25-29 and 40-44 age groups.**

The ABS publication is available from their website www.abs.gov.au: 3302.0.55.003 - Experimental Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2005-2007

From the news wire...

NEW ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH RESEARCH ADVOCACY GROUP

Some of Australia's most prominent scientists have joined forces with the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health in a new effort to advocate for improved health research.

for the new site. If anything disappears that you need, please email Gabrielle at grussell@ncca.org.au and I can email it to you.

We'll let you know when the new improved version appears!

NATIONAL HEALING FOUNDATION CONSULTATIONS START ON NATIONAL SORRY DAY

The 12th anniversary of National Sorry Day coincides with the start of consultations on the development of a National Healing Foundation. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team will conduct workshops in towns across Australia on a preferred model for the Healing Foundation. The Australian Government has allocated \$26.6 million for the Foundation over four years.

STOLEN GENERATIONS ALLIANCE SAYS BTH AUDIT IS THE NEXT STEP

Co-Chairs of the Stolen Generation Alliance believe May 26 this year is an appropriate day to call for the Rudd Government to conduct an audit of the 54 recommendations of the Bringing Them Home Report. The Stolen Generations Alliance wants the government to measure how far we have come and which recommendations still need to be addressed.

CHILDREN AT GREATER RISK DUE TO NT CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians called upon the Northern Territory to review and modify the Northern Territory's Care and Protection of Children Act 2007. The College believes the legislation in its current form will not lead to improvement in the health and well being of children in the Northern Territory. Mandatory reporting is likely to destroy young people's trust in health professionals.

CALL FOR WORLDWIDE STUDY OF ASSIMILATION POLICIES ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Aboriginal delegates to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues have called on the UN to instigate a worldwide study into the economic and health impacts of assimilation policies on Aboriginal peoples. NSW Aboriginal Land Council delegate, Councillor Patricia Laurie, speaking at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, said even today the Australian Government's policies that impacted on Aboriginal Australians, were still not consistent with major UN principles.

SIHIP WORKS UNDERWAY IN NT

The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, said refurbishments under the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) have started on the Tiwi Islands, Groote Eylandt and in Tennant Creek, with construction of new houses expected to start in coming months. The major new works will deliver 55 new houses and 308 refurbishments in communities on the Tiwi Islands, Groote Eylandt, Bickerton Island and in Tennant Creek.

NEW REPORT SHOWS DEATHS IN CUSTODY ON THE DECLINE

The trend in recorded deaths in prisons has significantly declined since 1997 and there is also a long-term decline in deaths occurring in police custody, according to the 2007 Deaths in Custody in Australia report released by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC).

2009 Martung Upah Appeal

martung upah appeal

The *Make Indigenous Poverty* History Campaign is an initiative of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC). Other projects run by NATSIEC include the Indigenous Theology project and a development fund.

NATSIEC receives significant funding from Act of Peace and the Uniting Church (NSW) 2% fund, however the rest of our funding comes from Church donations and donations to its annual appeal Martung Upah*.

By supporting the Martung Upah appeal you are joining us in a partnership to engage Churches and the wider community in fostering a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Together we can work towards healing the hurts of the past and building a better tomorrow for all our children so that injustice and discrimination will not be part of Australia's future.

We thank you for your support.

To download go to the Martung Upah Appeal webpage and to make an online donation [click here](#).

* Martung Upah is from Western Australia and means partnership.

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