

*Pax Christi Australia (NSW)*  
*Convenor's Report*  
*August 6, 2018*

**July 2, 2018 Inter-congregational Voice on Climate Change for the Pacific at Public Hearing:**  
Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee Inquiry into Strategic Effectiveness and Outcomes of Australia's Aid Program, at Masonic Conference and Function Centre.



**Ms Sharon Claydon MP Sr Lynne Crilley pbvm Senator Alex Gallachor (Deputy Chair), Maria Tiimon-Chifang, Sr Janice Ruff smsm, Senator Claire Moore, Mr Chris Crewther MP (Chair), Opening Statement from the Inter-Congregational Voice on Climate Change and the Pacific Islands to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade ( Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub Committee) Monday 2 July, 2018**

The Inter-Congregational Voice on Climate Change and the Pacific Islands .....is a group of Catholic Religious Congregations with historical and ongoing involvement among peoples in Pacific Island nations.....in the areas of education, health, community development and climate justice.

We have joined together to amplify the voices of people who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Many of our members have witnessed and felt the pain of the impacts of climate change on the people's everyday lives, their health, threats to their traditional life styles and fears for their future. For many years Pacific Island nations have been asking industrialised nations to mitigate climate change and recognise their vulnerability. Their representatives have attended United Nations Climate Conferences and were in Paris in 2015.

The panellist drew attention to the fact that climate change was left out of the Government's documents ***Australian Aid: Promoting Prosperity, Reducing Poverty, Enhancing Stability*** and ***Making Performance Count: Enhancing the Accountability and Effectiveness of Australian Aid*** though the Government's commitment to No 13 of Sustainable Development Goals on "taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" has as one of its targets:-

"Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change related planning in least developed countries and small island developing states including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalised communities". We draw your attention to this commitment. The panellist spoke of the impact on everyday life: food supply and food security, fresh water for drinking and cooking becomes scarce with salinity caused by rising sea levels. Undernourishment and diseases caused by contaminated water become major health risks. Also "empowering women and girls" is one of the 10 key targets of Australia's aid program. Where women lose their normal ways of living means they have to spend more time seeking food, water supplies and have less time to access education, employment and community leadership roles. They expressed concern that Australia is reluctant to be involved in meaningful loss and damage finance as vulnerable countries deal with the adverse effects of extreme weather and slow-onset events such as sea-level rise. There was also a call to increase Australian Aid from the current 0.25% to 0.7% as well as consulting with local communities in the development of aid projects. People need to be part of the decision making in their communities so that projects continue to be maintained and acquisition of skills. The

committee was also asked to take into account that the causes and effects of climate change be key to Australia's Foreign Aid program.

This was a very positive meeting with the politicians. They were very affirming of the participants and their credibility as they cited their past meetings with ACRATH in Canberra. The participants were praised by the Deputy Chair and encouraged by Senator Moore to not be bashful and lobby DFAT in similar ways that ACRATH has been doing.

### July 20, 2018 Philippine Consul-General, Sydney Letter for President Duterte



**International Coalition for  
Human Rights in the Philippines**

<http://www.humanrightspilippines.net/>

[inquire@humanrightspilippines.net](mailto:inquire@humanrightspilippines.net)

**Australian Chapter**

H E Rodrigo Duterte  
President of the Republic of the Philippines  
Malacanang Palace  
Manila, Philippines  
July 20, 2018

#### **Cancel the deportation of Sr Patricia Fox from the Philippines**

Your Excellency President Duterte,

We call on you and the Bureau of Immigration in the Philippines to rescind the deportation order on Sr Patricia Fox nds, which was reported in our media today. We urge you to consider the fact that Sr Fox's Missionary Visa was confirmed as valid.

Instead of deportation, you should be thanking her for her 27 years of kind support to the poor people of the Philippines.

Instead of deportation you should be conferring on her an honorary citizenship of the Philippines.

Instead of victimising Sister Fox, you and your government should be single-mindedly pursuing the peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines to try to resolve the root causes of the long-running conflicts in your country.

We unreservedly condemn the detention of Sr Pat on April 16-17, 2018, and the subsequent 30-day deportation order of April 25, as an arbitrary act of repression against her and against all foreigners who have committed to assist and support the Filipino people in their struggles in a poverty-stricken, exploited and violent society.

We are very clear – Sr Pat has committed no “illegal political activity” in the Philippines, and we applaud her decision to stay in the Philippines and to continue her honourable and humble work. As she has stood alongside the poor farmers, workers and indigenous people these last 27 years, we are proud to stand alongside her now.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Murphy  
Chairperson, Global Council  
International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines  
[peter\\_murphy1\\_au@bigpond.com](mailto:peter_murphy1_au@bigpond.com)

Movement Against Tyranny (Australia)

Migrante Australia

GABRIELA

Action for Peace & Development in the Philippines (APDP)

Philippines Australia Union Link (PAUL)



Outside the Consulate General



Inside the Consulate General

**July 25, 2018 National Dialogue with Christian, Muslim and Jewish People at St Mary's parish Erskineville.** After welcoming them to the parish, they were taken to the presbytery for a 'conversation' between the participants. Very inspiring and friendly meeting which consisted of conversation around common themes such as relationships, friendships and humanity. Bishop Philip Huggins, Anglican Bishop from Melbourne, was in attendance. This event is organised by the National Council of Church in Australia.

**July 26, 2018 Action for Peace and Development in the Philippines** (St Mary's Erskineville). This group deals with human rights abuses in the Philippines and abuses perpetrated by international, including Australian, mining companies against environment, farmers, peasants and indigenous people. Still awaiting an update from the International Solidarity Mission to Mindanao, July 15 to 23, 2018. Forum on Thursday August 30, 2018 at 6pm at Leichhardt Library: "Struggle for Human Rights in Philippines" seeking to discuss a more comprehensive view of Human Rights in the Philippines. With regard to human rights and Sr. Patricia Fox and, there was discussion about latest moves to deport her. She is appealing. The Secretary of Justice says she will not be deported whilst the appeal is to be heard. A draft appeal and letter to be used in campaigning was tabled and approved and with Sr Pat's approval will be sent to Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, Shadow Minister Penny Wong, local Members of Parliaments. There was also discussion about APDP Facebook going from private to public but with safeguards against trolls.

**July 26, 2018 Pacific Climate Watch Inter-congregational Watch on Climate Change in the Pacific** at Edmund Rice Centre.

Material is regularly going onto **Facebook** face book – not many people belong. Little has gone onto the **website** as Claude still needs tuition in that regard and does not know how to get in to the website.

**Report on Climate Change is not a Joke campaign:** Claude added his phone number to the permission form in case people want to revoke their permission

**Submission into Australia's aid program and climate change action:**

Following the invitation from the Joint Parliamentary sub-committee to appear before them to speak to the submission attended by five committee members and presentations were made by three of them to the Joint Parliamentary committee. The committee was most enthusiastic about the value of hearing from our group. *The report of their appearance will be added to the web site – Jill to send to Sarah/Sue. We have also received a Hansard copy of the proceedings. Members of the Parliamentary Committee strongly suggested that our group send a delegation to Canberra every year to meeting politicians and people at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.* The possibilities of going to Canberra were discussed and it was suggested that this could be a major action of our committee each year.

**Australian Catholic Social Justice Council monograph:** Claude presented the ideas that the sub-committee has been working with and led a discussion about the direction that the monograph can take.

- Possible title: Rising Tides – Raising Voices
- Discussed including a section on human rights and climate change.
- ***This subgroup will continue to work on the draft together for further discussion at next meeting***

**July 31, 2018 Presentation at Douglas Park for Spirituality Retreat** for MSC College teachers and staff. There was a large group of about 18 participants this time facilitated by Alison McKenzie.

**August 1, 2018 Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans.** One-year funding grant from the Federal Government ran out on June 30 and the Federal Government has revealed that it will not be refunding ACRATH this year. To continue our programs in the coming year \$300,000 is needed. A series of fundraising activities will be necessary throughout the year. Claude has already secured an assurance from the ***Café at the Gates of Salvation*** to do an event possibly at St Mary's Erskineville to raise funds. This group has been practising at the Church every Wednesday for some years.

In partnership with parishes, schools, businesses and community groups and in the corridors of Parliament, ACRATH works to combat human trafficking in all its forms.

In the past year ACRATH has:

- Extended its partnership with St Vincent's Health Australia which is changing the way hospitals identify and treat trafficked people and 'slavery proof' the goods and services they use. This project is now in its second year and has raised awareness amongst 17,000 staff.
- Helped establish the Victoria-Tasmania Catholic Anti-Slavery Working Group along with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and supported the work of the Sydney Archdiocese's Anti-slavery Taskforce.
- Advocated with other NGOs for justice for young people facing a forced marriage. This joint advocacy has led to the provision of 200 days of support and funded accommodation for a young person at risk of forced marriage – not linked to their involvement in criminal prosecution of their parents or carers.
- Worked in dozens of schools across the country informing students of the support available if they face a forced marriage. These sessions have also supported teachers and school counsellors on how best to respond to a disclosure.
- Disseminated forced marriage awareness-raising materials in 4 states to ACRATH volunteers and marriage celebrants.
- Created awareness in the community, particularly in vulnerable communities, of the risk of labour exploitation.
- Assisted 28 Trafficked women through our Companionship Program, supported by 17 trained volunteers; 24 children are assisted through the program.
- Over 7,705 hours of volunteer time donated, conservatively costed at \$238,189.

In recent weeks the Federal Government introduced the Modern Slavery Bill into Parliament which would require Australia's largest businesses, with annual consolidated revenue of more than \$100 million, to publish annual statements on the steps they are taking to address modern slavery in their supply chains and operations. This would not have been possible without ACRATH working for several years with others to see this legislation come into law. Unfortunately, it seems that it lets other businesses avoid this scrutiny and as yet there is not 'punishment' for failure to comply.