

SAY YES! Fr. Glenn Loughrey

Sermon – Christ Church South Yarra

Genesis 27:1-40

Yiradhu marang (Good day)

Dyiramadilinya badhu Wiradjuri. (I am proud to be Wiradjuri)

Yuwin ngadhi Glenn Loughrey (My name is Glenn Loughrey)

Ngadhu banhi-gu gulbarra Wurrundjeri

Boonarong mayiny-galang

ngan-gu ngurambang-ga nginha ngan-girra Dhurinya

gayi-dhi. (I'd like to acknowledge the Wurrundjeri people whose traditional country this assembly is being held-on.)

Our reading from Genesis begins a journey for Jacob and Esau which does not find its completion until Jacob overnights at Peniel some 25-plus years later. Jacob lives up to his name which means the one who deceives. Jacob is mu-nh-ain-gu-bi-l-dh-ne in Wiradjuri, one who takes advantage of others for their own purposes. Jacob proves to be a person we would describe as wiraywhinhangan – a wrong-thinking person. Interestingly his wiraywhinhangan is in his genes – his mother puts him up to it and he cheats his brother out of what was lawfully his.

Later in Genesis 32, we find this journey going full circle. At Peniel Jacob wrestles with a young man, some say it's God, but I suspect it is the mu-nh-ain-gu-bi-l-dh-ne and his wiraywhinhangan of 25 years before. When Jacob

wakes up he had a dislocated hip and walks forever in the

moment when he straightened his thinking and faced his conscience. This is moment is the moment of repair of the relationship, in Yologu, Makarratta, a concept we revisit in the spearing of Jesus on the cross and one which he shows to the disciples in the upper room. The process of the Statement from the Heart is embedded in both stories and sets us an example for our responsibility to repair the wrong thinking that saw the dispossession of our people of their birthright.

On August 14, 2024, my Wiradjuri mob will remember the declaration of martial law by Governor Brisbane against us in Bathurst, NSW. The war of extermination as it was described had commenced in January and didn't cease, if it ever has, until December of 1824.

This was a war between the Wiradjuri nation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. It wasn't the action of disparate squatters but a declared war between nations. Once the "impenetrable" Blue Mountains were crossed in 1813, the colony expanded onto the fertile plains of



the west.

Settlement of the new land was initially slow, but when Governor Thomas Brisbane came to power a flood of land grants were made. The influx of colonists put great strain on the traditional food sources and sacred sites of the Wiradjuri. By early 1824, the war had broken out, with the Wiradjuri adopting a guerrilla-style approach under their leader Windradyne.

In 1824, 16 Aboriginals were killed by soldiers on the Cudgegong River near Mudgee not far from where I grew up and was the beginning of the war of extermination propagated in the Mudgee area by the owner of the property, George Cox. Cox proclaimed publicly, "the only way to deal with this vermin is to exterminate them – women and children included". This unleashed hunting parties, poisoning with flour and

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DISARMING TIMES

A quarterly journal of Pax Christi Australia. It aims to provide members and interested peacemakers with peace news and views both local and international. We endeavour in each edition to reflect the three-fold emphasis of Pax Christi which engages members in study, Non-violent action and prayer for peace, justice, human rights, development and inter-faith and inter-civilisation dialogue.

PAX CHRISTI AUSTRALIA

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Human rights, justice and integrity of creation are central to its work.

We take a stand against militarism, nuclear weapons and the arms race.

As an ecumenical Christian movement

Pax Christi fosters the spiritual and scriptural dimensions of peace-making.

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Disarming Times is compiled by Harry Kerr, with the help of Pax Christi members throughout Australia

Pax Christi Victoria

13 P.O.Box 31, CARLTON SOUTH, Vic 3053

Tel: 03 9077 6464

03 9379 3889

email: ahmkerr@hotmail.com

Pax Christi New South Wales

P.O. Box A 681 Sydney Sth 1235,

Tel: 02 9550 3845 or 0411 450 953

Fax: 02 9519 8471

email: msecjust@smartchat.net.au

Pax Christi Queensland

PO Box 1262

Toowoomba QLD 4350

Tel: 0428 130 895

Email: dtutty@twb.catholic.org.au

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water, and stirring, an act too gruesome to describe. The subsequent violence that friends of mine have spoken about is an unwanted history in their family stories. By 1876 no local people remained. The area around Mudgee did indeed live up to the title given to the wars – the war of extermination.

As you are no doubt aware, the last such recorded massacre in Australia took place in 1928, over 100 years after the massacre in the Rylstone/Mudgee area, although there is evidence of continued action against Aboriginal people for some period after that across Australia.

My mother was born in 1928 and my father was born in 1927, 27 years after the man who I think was his grandfather, Jimmy Governor, or as he was made popular by Tom Kenneally and Fred Schepsi, Jimmy Blacksmith in the movie "*The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*". He was hanged in 1900 delaying Federation by a year. I was born in a place cleared of Aboriginal people in 1955. Yet my father warned us as small boys not to eat or drink anything we didn't know where it had come from. My father was *Blackfella* and I was called *YoungBlackfella*, and I still am to this day.

Not long after the 1967 referendum, my father sought a loan for a small farm. He was told we don't lend to people like you *Blackfella*. At school, I was called the son of a drunk bush black, and parents told their teenagers in my presence, they could be friends with me but just to remember who I was and where I came from. Only last Sunday, after a presentation, a man asked me, "What is the official definition of an Aboriginal?" and another said, "I have no time for fake, elite Aboriginals."

This story of genocide (tough word) is not ancient history – it is our contemporary lived experience.

The experience in the Bathurst region confirms the Crown's complicity in the conflict and does, in this case, refer to a declared war on this continent. Tough stuff to listen to and digest. It is not easy for either side if you have a modicum of compassion for the situation then and now.

Almost 200 years later, what has been the response of First Peoples to the destruction of their link to country, lore, language, and spirituality? How have we responded to the genocide?

Our response is one of absurd compassion embedded in the Statement From the Heart.

- We do not seek revenge; we seek to walk across the land together building a better future for this country.
- We seek recognition in the 1901 Constitution, the birth certificate of this nation.
- We seek a Voice on matters that impact our sovereign relationship with country and kin.
- We seek a treaty over time identifying how we live together, sharing this space based upon being included in the Constitution.
- We seek the opportunity to talk about the truth of what happened and what it feels like for both of us to live in this space called Australia.
- We seek the opportunity to make the changes necessary to become a just and whole nation through Makarrata, the coming together after a dispute.

A quick read of the Statement will reveal no words of demand, violence, or revenge – no evil for evil. Just an open hand and an invitation – a blessing. It is absurd.

What is this blessing?

- An opportunity has been offered to all non-Indigenous people to begin the process to right the wrongs by welcoming us into their world as equals, persons with a voice, able to contribute equally as co-sovereigns of this land. This invitation is not given to our own people. It is extended to you and if you accept, you will share the blessing of wholeness it leads us toward. We will no longer be *persona nullius*. We will be seen.
- If you can accept this offer with a yes, we will also allow you to shape your yes through legislation. We have resisted the temptation to tell you how to make your yes work. We have blessed you with the right and privilege to

ensure the legislation is fit for purpose. We have resisted the urge to be colonial and demand you do it our way. We know the impact of doing that as it is what has been done to us from the beginning.

This blessing is of the type of blessing given to a sinful world in the Easter Triduum – the resurrection of the broken body of Christ still carrying the visible signs of his physical destruction. This blessing does not hide the evil done. The scars remain and the Christ asks us, as he did

with those in the Upper Room, to look at them, no matter how difficult that may be to do.

Christ's outstretched hand to Thomas and the others is once again stretched out to us in the Statement from the heart and asks us all to look closely at our history as Jacob does at Peniel. And as Jacob learns to walk differently, we are called to be people who became **dhuluyanha** people – people who go straight ahead – walk straight and erect and do what is

right.

Say Yes!

*Canon Associate Professor Uncle Glenn Loughrey is a Wiradjuri man, priest, artist and author. In 2021, He became the first Indigenous canon in the 142-year history of St Paul's Cathedral, He has been seconded to enable further reflection on the **Statement from the Heart** across the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. His Paintings can be viewed at the Murnong Gallery, 100High St., Glen Iris Vic.*

PACEM IN TERRIS: A PROPHETIC LEGACY FOR OUR TIMES*

Caesar D'Mello

P*acem in Terris* (Peace on Earth) was proclaimed by Pope John XXIII sixty years ago against a seriously troubled backdrop, which in essence prevails today, too. WWII had ended eighteen years before the encyclical, but the ensuing years saw a burgeoning Cold War, highlighted by a Cuban missile crisis, the Berlin Wall, and Asia Pacific drawn in. Furthermore, in a fast-changing environment, social ferment was also challenging humanity. Having had a hand in defusing a potential nuclear war over Cuba, John XXIII could as well have written on *Bellum in Terris* (War on Earth), but constructing peace was his mission.

In our times modern weaponry has increased its destructive variety, productive capacity, sophistication and proliferation, yet global peace remains elusive. The contemporary Cold War is considered more dangerous than the last century's for the room, small as it was, it allowed for negotiation. The horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki notwithstanding, a modified version of the Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) concept remains a canon of military planning.

Prescribing a way forward for an anxious humanity preoccupied with both geopolitical conflict and social divisiveness, a reality we know too well in the 21st century, the encyclical states: "Peace is but an empty word, if it does not rest upon an order... that is founded on truth, built up on justice, nurtured and animated by charity, and brought into effect under the auspices of freedom".

Breaking with tradition, *Pacem in*

Terris is addressed "to all people of goodwill" and presents a blueprint for a just, sustainable, and peaceful future for humanity, with clear applications for us. Issued on 11th April 1963, during the Second Vatican Council, its reception ecumenically and in civil society was enthusiastic for its message to think anew and forge a new path. For Pax Christi, which emerged at the end of WWII, it validated its own foundational commitment to peace and reconciliation.

Human Rights

The world's nations ratified the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, but its implementation was patchy. It is self-evident that every human being is endowed with intellect and free will, from which our inalienable rights flow. However, they went unrecognised, denied, or ignored in parts of the world. Having made them central to the Vatican's social teaching, the encyclical's unambiguous reading of the dismal state of human rights triggered an unprecedented awareness and engagement both in the Catholic Church and beyond. This was a time when, inter alia, Nelson Mandela's stand on apartheid, and Rev Martin Luther King Jr's own struggles brought world attention to racism.

Pacem in Terris argued that "recognition, respect, safeguard and promotion of Human Rights of all are essential for authentic justice and peace". It declared human rights as universal and inviolable, and in an interdependent world, linked with concomitant obligations towards fel-

low human beings. One's right to live as fully human cannot be isolated from the duty of enabling another to live in dignity, too. Sadly, many are denied their human rights today.

The encyclical was particularly pertinent to Asia and the Pacific, with newly independent countries becoming a collective force demanding a rise in living standards. Foreign aid and private interests were financing frenetic development schemes, but deeper human values were missing in their plans. Children, women, workers, the poor were labour fodder. A segment of churches and other voices in the Third World challenged the status quo, but they were a minority. Alongside the World Council of Churches and other entities, the encyclical stated unequivocally that human rights make for the 'inherent dignity' of human beings.

Pacem in Terris' impetus for human rights has influenced and emboldened the Catholic Church and like-minded groups to speak out through the decades. They forcefully call out, for instance, on the appalling treatment of refugees and asylum seekers today. The right of our indigenous communities to live and act in freedom needs to be upheld, to do which we have an opportunity at the Referendum on the Voice.

The Universal Common Good

Pacem in Terris revisits the deeply Christian thinking on the Universal Common Good in an unequal world, especially apposite given a rich world co-existing with an impoverished one. It stressed that peace is more than the absence of war. It needs to be grounded in justice.

Governments, business, opinion influencers and other voices invoke the rhetoric of 'shared prosperity and happiness', when the lived experience and even economic analysis demonstrate that 'trickledown economics' favours the privileged. The 'market', prescribed by neoliberalism for 'achieving equilibrium', whether between nations or within each one, is impotent to realise this. Unequal distribution of income, wealth, opportunities and outcomes continue, as unacceptable poverty drags many down. Exploitation of resources of poor countries, now with acknowledged climate change and ecological impacts, is a sacrosanct element of current business models. As the encyclical implies, appropriating for a minority a greater share of the earth's resources that belong to all violates natural justice, and the human rights of many to live in dignity. The 'common good' that benefits all is not achievable without a fair distribution wherein those better placed, individually or as countries, exercise their moral responsibility to assist those less advantaged. The encyclical called for appropriate and effective social and political structures for achieving justice, which ensures peace.

War, Disarmament and Peace

John XXIII wrote that "*true and lasting peace among nations cannot consist in the possession of an equal supply of armaments but only in mutual trust*". This principle rejected a way of thinking which amounts to a form of idolatry that sustains war and weaponry. Having raised fear over assumed threat levels, adversaries place their trust in weapons and war as an incontestable direction for peace. This holds true even more today when ever more sophisticated and expensive arsenals of killing machines, including the warmly welcomed AI technology, are revered as the answer to hopes and prayers for victory in eventual conflicts, that will, undoubtedly, leave horrendous outcomes for humanity.

The evil of war, under specific conditions, may have been justified in previous wars by the Just War Theory, but the nuclear age makes it morally unjustifiable given the le-

thality, disproportionality and indiscriminate devastation by nuclear weapons. In our age, non-nuclear weapons, such as the Cluster Bombs used in Ukraine, would be unjustifiable, too. Nuclear weapons and the associated brinkmanship seem to be embraced with untroubled complacency. Protestations of peace are becoming predictable and meaningless, while the arming for war goes on, despite an existing surfeit of firepower with the immensely enriched munitions industry offering even more. Thanks to mainstream media generally and other advocates, war enjoys a veneer of respectability and normality today. However, its unpredictable outcomes as experienced in modern wars, and the tit-for-tat escalation as seen in the Ukraine War are glossed over. A mandarin on geopolitics recently said, 'the risk of war is real. It is not a theory'. Nevertheless, while an array of peaceful alternatives to conflict resolution can be pursued, it seems to be Peace, which springs from our common human nature and yearning, that needs to be justified. How do AUKUS and its unconscionable opportunity costs vis-à-vis basic needs, health, education and housing advance the common good? How much more destruction and loss of life should there be before it is realised that the Ukraine War is an investment in futility? *Pacem in Terris* categorically concluded that "*it is contrary to reason to hold that war is now a suitable way to restore rights which have been violated*". It called for the elimination of war, banning of nuclear weapons, and ending the arms race.

Pax Christi's stand against violence is seamlessly consonant with the spirit of the encyclical. Its early history, values and inspirational leaders, including the (recently departed) Bishop Luigi Bettazi, a member of the 'Pact of the Catacombs', steadfastly advocated non-violence. Their outlook is subsumed in the contemporary Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. For us in this region, it provides a strong basis for a continuing dialogue with millennia-old cultures. *Ahimsa* (non-killing, or non-harm to life in any form), a belief of a billion plus

adherents of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism, opens the door for exploring mutual understanding to reduce militarism and social violence in our vast region.

The Way forward: Reading the Signs of the Times

Pacem in Terris teaches that peace can only come from an order based on truth, justice, charity and freedom, but the two contesting 'orders' of today have different outlooks. 'A global rules-based order', on the one hand, is rebuffed as 'another form of racism' by its opponents who propose another, both sides determined to destroy each other politically, economically and militarily. This can hardly be a foundation for Just Peace. *Pacem in Terris* is the fruit of reflection and interaction with his history by one with a pastor's heart and mind who read the signs of the times portending peril. It sets forth a rational, constructive, humane 'our common good'-based way forward. We cannot treat present day developments merely as 'Breaking News', and must intuit what Ukraine, Myanmar, Afghanistan, drowning refugees, and other events are telling us. Some may consider this approach naïve and unrealistic. But who is more naïve? Those who are alive to signs of death and suffering from prospective war, and respond with ways of nurturing peace? Or those who resolutely put their energies, spirit and belief in preparing for one or more wars as a way to peace, and surely reap what wars always bring?

(*Article provided as background material for a Pax Christi Australia Webinar on September 28th on *Pacem in Terris*. More information on p.12 or contact the author.)

Caesar D'Mello is a member of the International Board of Pax Christi, and of Pax Christi Australia and Asia Pacific. He was formerly National Director of Christian World Service, the aid, justice and development agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA). He is a consultant on the inter-related sustainable development, climate change, justice and peace issues.

caesarmdm@gmail.com)

MILITARY IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Geoff Lacey

In the media discussions about military spending, for example with AUKUS, there is little if any consideration of the impacts on the economy and on the lives of people, and still less on the environmental impact. In this article, I would like to explore what we do know about the last item. I am drawing on the work of a small number of active groups that have worked on this issue. They have indicated that the information is hard to come by.

For example, at the opening of NATO's 2022 summit in Madrid, its Secretary announced an organisational cut in Greenhouse Gas emissions of at least 45% by 2030... However, it was unclear whether this applied only to NATO's institutional emissions or to the emissions of all of NATO members as well. Information in the following two sections was obtained from Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS), in a report: *How does war damage the environment?*

Environmental damage before conflicts

Building and sustaining military forces consumes vast quantities of resources. These include common metals, rare earth elements, water and hydrocarbons. Military vehicles, aircraft, vessels, buildings and infrastructure all require energy, and more often than not that energy is oil, and energy efficiency is low.

Militaries also need large areas of land and sea, whether for bases and facilities, or for testing and training. Military lands are believed to cover between 1 to 6% of the global land surface. In many cases these are ecologically important areas. Military training creates emissions, disruption to landscapes and terrestrial and marine habitats, and creates chemical and noise pollution from the use of weapons, aircraft and vehicles.

Sustaining and renewing military equipment and material involves ongoing disposal costs, with implications for the environment. This is true for nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons. All



weapons create environmental problems throughout their [lifecycle](#). Some are disposed of through [open burning](#) or detonation. Historically, vast quantities of surplus munitions were dumped at [sea](#).

Environmental damage during and after conflicts

High intensity conflicts consume vast quantities of fuel, leading to massive CO2 emissions. Large scale vehicle movements can lead to widespread physical damage to sensitive landscapes and their biodiversity, as can the intensive use of explosives. The use of explosive weapons in urban areas creates vast quantities of debris and rubble. Pollution can also be caused by damage to light industry and infrastructure such as water treatment plants. The loss of energy supplies can have reverberating effects, such as shutting down treatment plants or pumping systems, and the use of more polluting fuels.

Weapons and military material used during conflicts also leave environmental legacies. Land mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war can restrict access to agricultural land and pollute soils and water sources with metals and toxic materials. In major conflicts, large volumes of military scrap may be produced or abandoned. This can contain a range of polluting materials that contaminate soils and groundwater. Wrecked or damaged ships, submarines and offshore oil infrastructure cause marine pollution.

Deadly weapons are left behind in cities and countryside after many wars. These include landmines and cluster bombs. As a result, vast areas remain out of use in many countries. In conflicts with high lev-

els of displacement, land rights and ownership issues are common, particularly when returnees move home. There has been a sharp increase in deforestation rates in many post-conflict countries.

Estimating the Military's Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Researchers from CEOBS and from Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR) have developed a methodology to estimate global and regional military greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Their estimate for the global military carbon footprint is between 3.3% and 7.0% of total global GHG emissions. This wide range of estimates reflects the paucity of data in this field. They have not included GHG emissions arising from the impacts of warfighting, such as fires, other damage to infrastructure and ecosystems, post-conflict reconstruction, and health-care for survivors.

How do these estimates of the military carbon footprint compare with other business sectors? This is difficult to determine. One estimate is that the military footprint is about 85% of the footprint of the world's passenger cars.

Another comparison can be carried out with country level data. Using statistics on national carbon footprints, we see that if the global militaries were a country, they would have the world's fourth largest footprint, one larger than whole of Russia. Only the nations of China, the USA, and India would have larger carbon footprints.

Note that all these analyses were done before the Ukraine war. So the present carbon footprints will be much higher.

The Kakhovka Dam explosion in Ukraine

Sophia Sadogurska (of Enviroaction Ukraine) and Douglas Ware (of CE-BOS) have provided information about the consequences of the bombing of the Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine. The water in the dam was crucial for cooling nuclear reactors nearby. Some reactors have been shut down.

The explosion has disrupted agriculture. For example, the dam used to deliver water further south where water is scarce. This disruption poses implications for food security, given that Ukraine is a 'breadbasket for the world'.

The explosion has profoundly affected the natural ecosystems in the area, including the habitat for a number of fish species. There has been a massive destruction of fish, including species endemic to the area. Downstream from the dam, diverse and rare ecosystems and up to 47 natural protected areas may be affected, including Ramsar wetland sites.

The cultural impact

The expansion of military power works against our efforts to meet the ecological challenge of our times, characterised by climate change and extinction of species. The proponents of the military venture undermine our efforts to build a sustainable culture. Instead, they propagate a notion of national security based on military build-up. Pope Francis, in *Fratelli-tutti*, points out: "If we realize that we no longer have common horizons that unite us, every threatening situation breeds mistrust and leads people to withdraw into their own safety zone. Our world is trapped in a strange contradiction: we believe that we can ensure stability and peace through a false sense of security sustained by a mentality of fear and mistrust."

The mistrust of people corresponds with an exploitative attitude towards the natural world. Karen Armstrong notes that 'in our industrialised societies, we have been systematically destroying the natural order. By forcing the natural world to upgrade our lives and failing to see its essential holiness, we have damaged it perhaps irreparably.'

Meeting the ecological challenge requires a radically different outlook. It is a matter of looking at the natural world and experiencing it in a new way—developing a new relationship with it. In the words of Thomas Berry: 'The great model of all existence is the natural ecosystem, which is self-ruled as a community in which each component has unique rights and its comprehensive influence.'

If we are to move towards a sustainable culture, progressively more people will be engaged in activities that take care of the natural ecosystems—including sustainable food production and restoring local ecosystems. Consider one biblical insight into the relationship between peace and sustainable living.—an image of the good life put forward by the prophet Micah (4:1-5):

"It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be... raised up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it... For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations afar off;

and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid."

This biblical peace, *shalom*, comes as a gift. It implies a fullness of life in which people are at home with one another and with the natural world. This is in sharp contrast with any restless drive to dominate and build up military power.

Sources

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NATO won't say how it will count its carbon emissions,

<https://ceobs.org/nato-wont-say-how-it-will-count-its-carbon-emissions/>

How does war damage the environment?

<https://ceobs.org/how-does-war-damage-the-environment/>

Estimating the Military's Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR) & Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS) (Nov. 2022) *Dr Geoff Lacey is a Committee member of Pax Christi Victoria. He is a civil engineer with a long career as an environmentalist, and naturalist. He has been committed to and involved with the environmental movement, especially at the grass-roots, since*

HIROSHIMA DAY AUGUST 6, 2023 SYDNEY TOWN HALL

Claude Mostowik

For 78 years, the earth and its inhabitants have lived under the threat of nuclear destruction. Trillions of dollars have gone into their development and maintenance, while actual human needs of shelter, health care, food, and education are deeply underfunded. Since its founding in 1945, Pax Christi has prioritised the work of nuclear disarmament and is member of the **International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons**. Many Christian churches celebrate The Feast of the Transfiguration. The

mountain top experience gave them a glimpse of Jesus that stretched their imaginations where they saw themselves as part of something bigger – to be courageous instruments of justice and compassion. On that mountain, they hear a voice that calls, 'Listen to him (Jesus)!' But the one who is transfigured on the mountain will soon be disfigured on the cross and points to the disfigured in the world. This feast also commemorates a **disfiguration**. As Jesus climbed the mountain, on this day pilots climbed into cockpits to

kill 100's of 1000's of people. As we remember the mushroom-shaped cloud that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we keep killing our siblings and disfiguring the Earth. The disfiguration continues. The historian John Dower in his book **Cultures of War**, *'The policy makers, scientists, and military officers who had committed themselves to becoming death... never seriously considered not using their devastating new weapon. They did not talk about turning mothers into cinders or irradiating even the unborn. They*

had committed themselves to becoming death... never seriously considered not using their devastating new weapon. They did not talk about turning mothers into cinders or irradiating even the unborn. They brushed aside discussion of alternative targets, despite the urging of many lower-echelon scientists that they consider this. They gave little if any serious consideration to whether there should be ample pause after using the first nuclear weapon to give Japan's frazzled leaders time to respond before a second bomb was dropped.' They just did it, twice, and the world changed radically. Almost

80 years later, a global leader is once again evidently considering the possible use of what are now called 'tactical nuclear weapons' even more powerful than the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The call to us is to listen. Who is listening to the hibakusha? Who is listening to the many voices speaking against the evil of nuclear possessions, the manufacture of more lethal weapons, threats against nations, the abuse of power, everyday hatred, rivalry, violence, greed, bullying and disfiguring of peoples' reputations? The call from the mountain is to proclaim peace by our lives, our actions, and words. We have a choice. Our every choice can be liberating or diminishing of others and our world. There are voices that are provoking war more than peace. Who is listening to the voices of the Japanese people crying for a nuclear free world. There are voices calling for peace and dialogue because we are siblings, such as Pope Francis. There are voices calling for acknowledgement of their presence for 60,000 years. There are voices of peoples impacted around the world because of climate change whether rising waters or ferocious fires. There are voices of people such as Palestine, Papua and Kurdistan for independence. Let us listen to these voices calling to us.

The Transfiguration was a turning point in Jesus' ministry. Hiroshima was a turning point in human history. Both involved light. One was the light of love, life and hope and the other a deadly light, the death of everything for generations, of



mass murder and ongoing threat. Pope Francis (2019) asks 'How can we propose peace if we constantly invoke the threat of nuclear war as a legitimate recourse for the resolution of conflicts?' He has repeatedly said that the mere possession of nuclear weapons is immoral. They do not ensure stability and peace. They give a false sense of security sustained by mentality of fear and mistrust that poisons relationships between peoples and obstructing any possible form of real dialogue. He calls us to rediscover each other as brothers and sisters and be united in solidarity and friendship, to witness to our common humanity. But are we listening? Are we listening to the prophetic voices of the hibakusha survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki who continue to serve as a warning to us and for coming generations? The AUKUS defence agreement with the United States and the United Kingdom would not lead to a more peaceful world. It will not contribute to a peaceful society at home or abroad. Increased military spending on nuclear technology would come at the expense of social services. This agreement means that Australia would continue to live in the shadow of the US. We know where this has led from US-led wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, AUKUS sends a strong signal that Australia sees itself as an adversary to China.

Many among us live in a prison of passivity. We have created our own prisons where we convince ourselves that we are safe because the authorities have installed a sacred

umbrella to protect us. We have stop the casual or nonchalant acceptance and support of psychotic rulers who promote first-strike nuclear war. We cannot embrace hopelessness as a way of life - the feeling that we have no power. We might feel we are in the wilderness with our protests. Let's make them anyway.

End nuclear weapons now before they end us. Stop escalating the war in Ukraine now.

Make peace with Russia and China now.

We can counter hatred with love. Compassion, sharing, generosity, sobriety, and responsibility are for us the choices that nurture *personal fraternity*. We can promote **social fraternity** that recognises equal dignity for all, that fosters friendship and belonging, promotes education, equal opportunities, decent work and social justice, hospitality, solidarity and cooperation, social solidarity economy and a just ecological transition, a sustainable agriculture that ensures access to food for all, thus favouring harmonious relationships based on mutual respect and caring for the welfare of all. And we can build an **environmental fraternity** by making peace with nature, knowing that we are interconnected.

We cannot allow God's dream for humanity to become a nightmare because of war which is often more enticing than peace by promoting profit for a few at the expense of the wellbeing of entire populations. This money is money soiled with innocent blood. It is not too late to prioritize peace.

Western media often fail to report on the fears of billions of human beings around the world who want a just peace that includes a chance for sustainable development. Politicians and media try to justify the unjustifiable. They systematically whitewash their crimes by engaging in a form of totalitarian censorship and a vicious persecution of whistle-blowers who tell us about crimes committed in our name. Indeed, secrecy is an enabler of crime. That secrecy ignored the critical voices who then argued against the need to drop a bomb, or two, on Japanese cities

that were already devastated by U.S. fire-bombings. That secrecy does not address the health impacts of the research, testing, and production of such weapons, which still cause disease and death as victims of nuclear weapons' development as were the people impacted by the fallout from U.S. nuclear testing in the Western United States and the Marshall Islands in the Western Pacific, uranium miners on First Nations lands, and many others.

The coming into force of the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) in 2021 is a sign of hope though

nuclear weapons states have yet to join. The very existence of this treaty helps to delegitimise the development and possession of nuclear weapons. We need to abolish nuclear weapons before they abolish us. In 1986, President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev took the first steps in history to reduce the number of nuclear weapons. It was done and can be repeated.

Let's work for the elimination of these weapons. The threat of nuclear war has not gone away. We learn today that it is possible to see things

differently and act differently. It is possible to recognise the sacredness and dignity in each other. It is possible that we can live together in our diversity, to work for peace at home and abroad, to let go of racism and hatred for homosexuals and gender diverse people, to let go of greed, power, to let go of the need to control, to give up violence in word and action, to let go of fear that leads to paralysis and inaction. Thank you for your presence here.

Fr. Claude Mostowik msc

President, Pax Christi Australia

PNG PUBLIC SERVICE RAISES FEARS OVER MARAPE CEDING SOVEREIGNTY TO THE US

Increasing disquietude is simmering amongst Papua New Guinea's public sector, as well as with a growing number of that nation's intellectuals, as concerns over diplomatic ties Port Moresby is forging with Washington would appear to be triggering further tensions in the Indo Pacific region.

This has been evidenced by a number of anonymous individuals from PNG having contacted this publication and others to express dismay around two security negotiations our Pacific neighbour is currently in the midst of establishing: one with Washington, while the other is with Canberra.

PNG sources were already alarmed about the Australia-PNG bilateral security treaty (BST), due to its words conveying an erosion of [sovereignty](#), while the US-PNG defence cooperation agreement (DCA) simply hands over the keys to local military bases providing the US with unimpeded access.

US president Joe Biden was supposed to attend a meeting of the Quadrilateral security dialogue on 20 May in Sydney, which was cancelled due to a US domestic crisis. This also meant that a stopover in Port Moresby that was to facilitate the signing of several military arrangements was also delayed.

Anthony Blinken, US state secretary, arrived in PNG [on 21 May](#) to advance negotiations. This coincided with leaked sections of the defence agreement having been released to media, which clearly outline the ability for a significant US military presence to be

established in that country.



Shifting alliances

An anonymous officer from the PNG Ministry of Foreign Affairs got in contact with [Sydney Criminal Lawyers](#) last week, stating that whilst PNG has long been establishing a naval venture with Australia on Manus, the latest arrangements with the US were sparked by last year's Solomon Islands episode.

In mid-April 2022, the Solomons entered into a new security pact with Beijing, and whilst this controversial alignment between these nations has entered into force, an attempt by China to establish a new overarching security relationship with ten other Pacific island nations fell through.

But according to the PNG foreign ministry officer, this arrangement between China and the Solomons had led PNG prime minister James Marape to consider that his nation's dominance in Melanesia could be threatened by this new security alignment with Beijing.

And this then saw Marape enter into separate treaties with Washington and Canberra. And whilst the White House rapidly carried out its negotiations, which led to the establishment of the defence agreement last

month, Australia's diplomatic arrangements continue to be in the drafting stage.

Indeed, the anonymous source explains that what this reveals is the Marape government is now prioritising its relationship with Washington over that with Canberra, even though Australia is the Melanesian nation's closest neighbour and long-term partner in the Indo-Pacific region

Maintaining control

At the time it was announced that Blinken would be attending PNG rather than Biden to sign off on the defence agreement, an anonymous PNG government employee sent copies of screenshots to a number of publications, including the ABC, that [purportedly reveal key points](#) of the US-PNG DCA.

Sections of the defence agreement that were released, reveal that the US will be able to establish a substantial military presence in PNG. And whilst joint training is mentioned, so too is the capacity to refuel aircraft that have been conducting reconnaissance and surveillance missions in the area.

According to the PNG foreign affairs source, the Australian-PNG BST was meant to have been finalised in April, but at the request of the US, the Melanesian nation has delayed its finalisation, so Port Moresby could work out the finer details around the White House DCA first.

Washington is also said to have obtained a copy of the Australian BST, which outlines that our nation sought to maintain its position as PNG's

primary security partner, and the US then redrafted some of its DCA, with the aim of rebalancing the security relationships Papua has with its two western partners.

Neocolonial manoeuvres

The [2019 Memorandum of Understanding for the Joint Initiative at Lombrum Naval Base](#) aimed to establish a joint Australian-PNG presence at the military base on Manus Island that sought to increase the interoperability between the defence forces of both nations.

Parts of the DCA leaked last month suggest that the agreement will provide greater access to that base to US officials. And ex-PNG foreign affairs officer Dominic Navue Sengi [wrote recently](#) that the Lombrum arrangements are so secretive that PNG ministers are unaware of their implications.

In recognising that these recent developments have warring on China as a central focus, Sengi outlines that whilst the western media has been busy propagating the "China threat", the coming global conflict is more geared towards Washington countering Beijing's rising economic dominance.

The PNG journalist further underscored that the clearest example that the US and Australia are attempting to militarily encroach upon PNG's territorial jurisdiction is contained within the provision of the document that establishes a joint presence at the Lombrum base on Manus Island.

The colonisers become colonised

The encroachments that the Australian government appears to be attempting to make into PNG sovereignty is learnt behaviour, as to a large extent, it reflects what the United States has been doing in this country over the last decade.

The [2014 Force Posture Agreement](#) permits the US access to dozens of local military bases, and in circumstances where Washington has decided it might upgrade a military base located on Australian soil, the White House maintains complete control over that facility during the renovations.

The agreement has also established an ongoing presence of around 2,500 US Marines in the Northern Territory, and the treaty further ensures increasing interoperability be-

tween the air forces of both this country and the United States.

And since March, our nation has become thoroughly embroiled in the AUKUS agreement, which will provide the nation with eight nuclear-powered submarines, while, in the meantime, the US and UK are going to establish their own joint rotational submarine presence in WA by 2027. So, whilst PNG PM Marape holds concerns about our nation attempting to usurp some of his country's sovereignty, in much the same way, the US is carrying out an ever-increasing amount of similar actions that serve to erode this nation's autonomy.

Indeed, the source from the PNG foreign affairs office outlines that they and their colleagues believe that Australia is their nation's longest and closest ally, and they assert that Marape should not be betraying this long-term relationship due to short-term temptations provided by the US.

Paul Gregoire is a Sydney journalist and writer.

This article first appeared in "Sydney Lawyers' Articles"

LIFE IN GAZA

Rahmah a-Z'anin

A 48-year-old resident of Beit Hanoun, lives with her mother and her sister, who suffer from chronic illnesses. Their home was damaged when a neighbour's home was bombed During the latest escalation, on 13 May 2023, at around 10:00 A.M., we heard the neighbours shouting at us that we had to evacuate the house quickly. It was very scary. I was living with my sister Tamam (62) and my mother Fatimah (85) on the ground floor of a two-story building belonging to our family that was built about 70 years ago. We rented the apartment on the second floor to a different family. My mother uses a wheelchair and suffers from osteoporosis, and my sister Tamam has diabetes and cartilage erosion in her knees, and she lost vision in her left eye when she had a stroke.

When they said we had to evacuate, Tamam went into shock. I quickly packed a bag for the three of us, and we started to push our mother in the wheelchair to the end of the street, about 900 meters from our home. All the neighbours were running away from their homes, and some of them helped us. My brother, Nimer (55), who lives in Beit Hanoun, came and took my mother to his house. Tama and I stayed there, and then a drone came and launched a missile at the home of Zuheir a-Z'anin, which was a few meters away from our home. After about 25 minutes, an F-16 plane launched a missile, and then there was a really strong explosion.

The ground shook under our feet, and dust and rocks flew in the street and on all of the houses in the area. There was a lot of panic, and the people who were around us started running and fleeing. About five minutes after the explosion, I returned home with a few other neighbors, and when I got there, I saw that almost all of the doors and windows were shattered. All the furniture in the house was destroyed, and everything was covered in sand and rocks. The electrical wires and water system were also damaged, and the house looked like it had been through an earthquake. The pigeons and chickens that Tamam raised and sold to support us all died in the bombing.

Before the bombing, I left the house in my prayer clothes and slippers because I didn't have time to change. I just wanted to get my mother out as quickly as possible. We didn't take any clothes or documents with us either, not even our phones. When I went back home, I was able to find my phone and charger, and then I left quickly because I was afraid the house would collapse on me. It was in terrible shape.

KHAWLAH A-TUM

40 year-old mother of four from Rafah, diagnosed with cancer about a decade ago and needs chemotherapy that is not available in the Gaza Strip. Israel has rejected all of her applications to travel for treatment in West Bank hospitals since 2016.

In 2013, about a decade ago, as I was weaning my youngest, Muhammad, I noticed a small lump around my neck. I went to an UNRWA clinic soon after, and the doctor said I had small lumps in the neck and armpit area and referred me for tests at the European Hospital in Khan Yunis. It turned out I had tumors. I had a biopsy, and the results came in ten days later. They were malignant. I had to undergo a mastectomy and lymph node removal. After the surgery, I would go to the hospital for ten days at a time, and a month later, I started chemotherapy at the European Hospital once a week. It lasted about a year, and it was hard. My body was exhausted from the treatments.

In 2015, I was referred for chemotherapy at al-Mutal'a Hospital (Augusta Victoria) in East Jerusalem. I received a coverage guarantee from the Palestinian Authority and made an appointment for December of that year. I applied for an entry permit, and then the Israel Security Agency summoned me for questioning at Erez Crossing. When I showed up for the questioning, they asked me why I wanted to go to al-Mutal'a and some other questions, and then they told me to go home without giving me an answer. About ten days later, I got a rejection.

I contacted a human rights organization and asked them to help me, and in the end, I was able to get a permit, and I went to al-Mutal'a Hospital in February 2016 with my aunt Salwa a-Nirab (63). After a month of exhausting treatments, we returned to Gaza, and when we arrived at Erez Crossing, my aunt was allowed to go through, and I was taken for questioning. They asked me again why I was at al-Mutal'a Hospital and what I had done there. I told them that I was a cancer patient, that I was exhausted and that I hadn't done anything. They kept me for several hours in a cold glass room with the AC running at a low temperature. At some point, I was ordered to undress. There was no one in the room, just cameras. Then they let

me through, and I returned home. That was the only time I went for treatment at al-treatment in the Strip, even though I had referrals for a permit to travel were rejected. IN 2019, I went mad (35) and got chemotherapy at a hospital there to the Strip, I started having strong pain in my left tests, and it turned out I had another cancerous spread to the lungs and bones. I got chemotherapy but it was useless because you can't get the treat-Since then, I've gotten a few referrals for treatment but all the applications I made were refused.



Mutal'a. After that, I continued the to al-Mutal'a. All my applications to Egypt with my brother Muham-for a month. After we went back leg. I had a CT scan and other mass in the pelvic area, which had at the Turkish hospital in the Strip, ment I really need in the Strip. at al-Istishari Hospital in Ramallah,

I got an appointment for chemotherapy there on 4 April 2023. I applied again for me and my aunt as my companion, but I received a message that our applications were still under review. When I saw the message, I just broke down.

I made another appointment for 16 May 2023 and submitted another application, and this time, I got another summons from the Israel Security Agency for interrogation at Erez Crossing. When I arrived at the crossing, the soldiers told me that the interrogation had been put off and that they would let me know what the new date was. The next day, I got a message that my application was rejected.

My physical condition is terrible. The cancer has already spread all over my body, and I lie in bed at home all day, barely moving. My sister Suha (43) is at home with me and also accompanies me to treatments at a hospital in the Gaza Strip. She helps me take care of my four children, Nurhan (17), Nasmah (15), Razan (13), and Muhammad (11). Sometimes, when I feel particularly bad, I go to my mother's house, and the children stay with their father. They are sad, and I always feel sorry for them and for myself.

I need these treatments. I have the right to receive them, and I don't understand why my applications keep getting rejected. I didn't do anything wrong. All the thoughts have taken a toll on my mental health, and I can't fall asleep at night anymore. I'm going to apply again, and this time, I'll try to get a permit for my sister Suha to come as my companion. I hope I won't get called in for interrogation again, and I pray to God I won't be denied a permit again and that I'll get the treatment.

Update: After another application Khawlah a-Tum submitted was denied, she was summoned for another ISA interrogation at Erez Crossing on 5 June 2023, and after being questioned for about three hours, she was told she would get a permit. She had to wait another month until she was notified by the Palestinian Authority Civilian Affairs Department on 2 July 2023 that the Israelis had issued her a permit valid for a month starting 4 July 2023.

* Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 5 June 2023.

MENATALLAH KHASWAN

17-year-old from a-Rimal neighborhood in Gaza City, who lost both of her parents and a brother in the bombing.

Our family lived in a penthouse on the a-Rimal neighborhood in Gaza City. I lived with my siblings - Yusef (19), Yazan (15), Yamen (13) and Miral (9). In the early morning hours, my siblings and I were killed. Now we live in the a-Sheikh Radwan neighborhood.

At 2:00 A.M., I was woken up by a loud explosion. I don't know exactly what happened. I tried to get out of my bed, but there was something very heavy on top of me. It was dark; there was no light at all. I had fallen on me, and then I realized it little by little until I was able to get out.

I went, in the dark, to look for the rest of my family. I heard Yazan talking to Yamen. Yamen was under the rubble. He could barely speak and could not move. I went to look for my father and mother, because I couldn't hear or see them. I tried to go into their bedroom, but I couldn't because the entrance was blocked by pieces of concrete and stones. I couldn't even see if there was anyone in the room because of the darkness. I tried to climb over the rubble, but I couldn't get through. I was very worried about them and my brother Yusef, because I didn't see him either.

Then some neighbors and paramedics came to the apartment. They asked me who lived in the apartment. I told them that my brother Yusef was in his room, that my brother Yamen was also in his room but couldn't get out, and that my father and mother were not answering. They went to Yusef's room right away and got him out. I saw a lot of blood and realized that he was seriously injured, but I didn't get a good look at him. They took him out very quickly. Then they got Yamen out and took him downstairs, along with Yazan and Miral.

I was very worried about my father and mother. I told the paramedics that I couldn't find them and showed them where their room was. They started clearing the wreckage until they found them. They were in rough shape. A concrete pillar fell right on top of them when they were in their bed. They were taken to a-Shifaa Hospital in an ambulance, and then my siblings and I were also taken to get looked at.

Then we were told that my brother Yusef had been martyred. I was in shock. We were very close. He wasn't just a brother. He was my friend too. We would sit and talk, go out together to have fun or for shopping. He was a quiet guy who studied dentistry at the university and excelled in his studies. I never thought I would have to say goodbye to him. As soon as I was told he had died, I cried so much. My uncle Muhammad, my mother's brother, tried to calm me and my siblings down and took us to his house.

At 10:00 A.M., my aunt came and told me that my parents had also been martyred. I couldn't stop crying. I was in shock about what had happened. My aunt hugged me and tried to calm me down, but I couldn't believe what she was telling me. I tried telling myself it was a lie, that they would be fine, but everyone around me told me that it was true, and that's what happened. We lost them in seconds, without warning, without me being able to think about it before.

I was not ready to lose my parents at such a young age. I am not ready to live in a reality where my father and mother are gone. But that's what has been forced upon me since they were killed. I have to get over it and take responsibility for myself. I'm scared my siblings will devolve mentally because of the trauma they experienced. I have grown up by decades all of a sudden. I've become mother and father to my sibling, but I'm only a child myself.



sixth floor in the a-Dawali building in the there with my parents and my four siblings and Miral (9). On Tuesday, 9 May 2023, and I became orphans. We lost our parents and my brother Yusef. Now we live in the a-Sheikh Radwan neighborhood.

explosion. It was a missile or a bomb; I tried to see what happened, but there was something very heavy on top of me. I couldn't see what it was because everything was dark; there was no light at all. I had fallen on me, and then I realized it little by little until I was able to get out.

I went, in the dark, to look for the rest of my family. I heard Yazan talking to Yamen, and then I heard my sister Miral's voice.

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All stories from B'Tselem – https://www.btselem.org/about_btselem
The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

NOTICE BOARD

NEW SOUTH WALES

Pax Christi Meetings

We normally meet on the First Monday of each month at 6.00pm for shared meal that members bring and the meeting follows at 6.30 pm.

**Contact: Claude Mostowik
(02) 9550 3845 or 0411 450 953**

The venue: 209A Edgeware Road, Enmore.

**JOIN SUPPORTERS
AROUND AUSTRALIA TO
WALK FOR YES ON
SUNDAY 17 SEPTEMBER.**

Brisbane Walk for yes

Sunday 17 Sep 2023

@ 10:00 AM

South Bank Cultural Forecourt,
Melbourne St, South Brisbane,

Sydney Walk for yes

Sunday 17 Sep 2023 @ 01:30 PM

Redfern St, Redfern,

Melbourne Walk for yes

Sunday 17 Sep 2023 @ 12:00 PM

State Library, 328 Swanston St,
Melbourne,

Canberra Walk for yes

Sun 17 Sep 2023 at 11:00 AM

Northwest Grounds of the National Library of Australia, Parkes PI W.

PAX CHRISTI WEBINAR

PEACE ON EARTH IN 2023 & BEYOND

A Webinar exploring Pope John XXIII's encyclical PACEM IN TERRIS

(Peace on Earth)

**And its relevance for today
Human Rights, and the State-
ment from the heart
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**Thursday 28th September
7.00 pm-8.30 pm**

Speakers

Fr. Glen Loughrey. *Canon Associate
Professor Uncle Glenn Loughrey is a
Wiradjuri man, priest, artist and au-
thor.*

David Tutty, *Executive Officer at
Social Justice Commission Catholic
Diocese of Toowoomba*

Susan Connelly Sr. *Susan Connelly-
a Josephite Sister with many years
experience of working for justice and
human rights, especially in Timor
Leste*

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or pax@paxchristi.org.au

**See article on page 3: Pacem in Ter-
ris: A Prophetic Legacy for Our Times**

QUEENSLAND

**Pax Christi Meetings
Pax Christi Queensland**

Contact:

Pam Nair (Secretary): 07 3711
3273 pamnair@hotmail.com

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The Voice and the Uluru Statement as an instrument of peacemaking.

[https://raisingpeace.org.au/raising-
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20Raising%20Peace%20online%
20peace,contribute%20to%20a%
20peaceful%20world](https://raisingpeace.org.au/raising-peace-festival-2023/#:~:text=The%20Raising%20Peace%20online%20peace,contribute%20to%20a%20peaceful%20world)

I/We wish to apply for or renew membership of the International Christian Peace Movement - Pax Christi Australia.

(Membership is from January to December)

(Please tick box if you wish to receive your copy of Disarming Times by e-mail)

New South Wales Members please return your membership application/renewal to PO Box A 681 Sydney South 1235 NSW

All others: please return your membership application/ renewal to 13 Mascoma St, Strathmore, Vic 3041 . Direct transfer to Pax Christi Victoria Inc BSB 063-161 Account number 00900935

Please Advise Terry Byrne t.byrne15@optusnet.com.au

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ENCLOSED \$..... (Single \$35; Low income \$20; Family \$45)