



**yarra**institute  
*for religion & social policy*

The Yarra Institute for Religion and Social Policy is an independent ecumenical organisation committed to promoting scholarship and research on the social traditions of the Christian churches, particularly as they bear on current social issues.



As the name indicates, the Yarra Institute focuses on the interaction between religious belief and areas of social policy in Australia. It also explores how religious and moral values bear on specific issues, including economics and globalisation, hunger and poverty, international aid and development, indigenous affairs, issues of war and peace, conflict resolution, social justice, the environment, and climate change.

While it springs from Christian social traditions, the Yarra Institute recognises Australia's secular, pluralistic and multicultural society, and commits to engaging with the broader culture in a collaborative effort to promote the common good.



Signing the MoU with YTU. Left rear : Incoming YTU President Fr Chris Monaghan  
Dr Bruce Duncan  
Dr Rowan Ireland  
Dr Wes Campbell  
In front :  
Dr Larry Nemer  
Dr Stephen Ames.

The Yarra Institute was formally acknowledged by the Council of Yarra Theological Union in late 2008, and a Memorandum of Understanding signed. The then YTU President, Dr Larry Nemer SVD, nominated Dr Bruce Duncan as initial Institute Director. YTU has generously provided office space, room for the Redemptorist social justice library, and access to the facilities in the new YTU Study Centre.



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### Website

The Yarra Institute had an initial web presence, courtesy of Social Policy Connections, but now has its own website at [www.yarra institute.org.au](http://www.yarra institute.org.au) for more academic articles and publications, and as a forum for scholarly debate. It also promotes events and conferences, and publishes its own research findings.

### YARRA INSTITUTE OFFERS ...

**Significant research capability** to focus our intellectual resources purposefully on current pressing social issues.

**A forum** in which to explore how Christian social values and traditions could improve human wellbeing today.

**Resources** to deepen knowledge of Christian and other traditions of social concern, and to foster lively interaction among them.

**A platform** from which to engage in the public conversation, drawing from Melbourne's deep ecumenical resources.

**Networks** of people concerned to contribute to the formation of public policy.

**Research partnerships.** The Yarra Institute has an experienced Board of Directors with excellent resources to supervise research projects and higher degree students. The Yarra Institute would be pleased to discuss possible research projects or partnerships with agencies and organisations.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

#### Volunteers

The Yarra Institute benefits greatly from the pro-bono contributions of its supporters and volunteers. As our research activities expand, so do our needs in administration, marketing, funding, publication, editing and computer skills.

If you have skills you would like to contribute in this way, we would be pleased to talk with you.

## Publications & the Yarra Institute Press

With a grant from the Melbourne College of Divinity, the Yarra Institute published online in 2011 *The National Directory: Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support Services of the Australian Churches*.

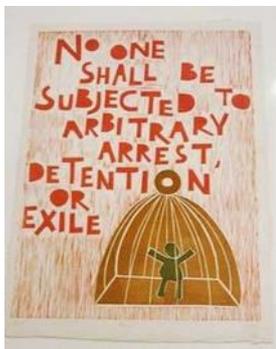
### Yarra Institute research projects

Dr Joan Daw's project on *Young People, Faith, & Social Justice* was launched in May 2013. It was funded with a grant from MCD University of Divinity.

The Yarra Institute also wrote in 2013 an issue of the ATF Journal, *Interface*, on globalisation.

Dr Cal Ledsham's investigation on the morality of torture is in the latter stages of writing.

### Transforming asylum seeker policies



ianmackenz, flickr cc

With funding from the Good Shepherd Foundation, the Yarra Institute published in 2011 *Long-term health costs of extended mandatory detention of asylum seekers* by Tony Ward, and is publishing a detailed study by Dr Tony Ward and Caz Coleman on why community detention is preferable for refugees and for Australia.

### The Church's role in East Timor

Dr Jim and Professor Therese D'Orsa are working with Bishop Hilton Deakin on his recollections of East Timor's struggles for independence.

### Financial support

As a research body within the MCD University of Divinity, the Yarra Institute has DGR tax deductibility. It can apply for research grants from government and private sources, and enter industry partnerships with church or other organisations for research.

### How to donate

Donations to the Yarra Institute can be made through  
The Finance Manager  
MCD University of Divinity  
21 Highbury Road Kew Victoria 3101  
requesting that the donation be forwarded to the Yarra Institute. The University will issue a receipt. Alternatively, write to us at the Yarra Institute, and we will forward your gift to MCD.

### Contact

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## Members of the Yarra Institute Board

**Rev Dr Stephen Ames** (President of the Board) is an Anglican priest and Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral. He is an honorary Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne, where he lectures in the History and Philosophy of Science. He specialises in the relationship between science and religion.

**Rev Dr John Bottomley** is a minister of the Uniting Church in Australia. He has held parish ministries in Knox and East St Kilda, and is a founding member and Director of the Creative Ministries Network. The Network integrates faith with the arts to address issues of justice at work in a social, political and environmental context.

**Dr Jim D'Orsa** is involved in pastoral planning in the Diocese of Sale, and chairs its Diocesan Strategy Team. He is also involved with Broken Bay Institute in the areas of leadership and missiology. His current research concentrates on the Theology of Mission as it applies to education, secularisation/secularity and their implications for education, and issues around 'Catholic identity' in schools.

**Professor Therese D'Orsa** is head of the Missiology Department at the Broken Bay Institute Sydney. She completed 11 years as Director of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Sale, as well as her term as Executive Director of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. She gives special focus to justice education and mission.

**Dr Rowan Ireland** is an Honorary Associate in the School of Sociology at La Trobe University in Melbourne. He worked in Latin America, and is investigating social movements in three Brazilian cities. He is also studying secularisation and new forms of religious life and civil society in Australia.

**Dr John D'Arcy May** has returned to Australia after serving as Associate Professor of Interfaith Dialogue at the Irish School of Ecumenics. He specialises in inter-religious dialogue, including between Christians and Buddhists, Asian, tribal religions, and modernity. He is Associate Director of the Yarra Institute.

**Dr Robyn Reynolds Olsh** lived and worked for many years with indigenous Australians. She lectures at YU in Missiology and in Pastoral Theology and Ministry Studies.

**Dr Paul Rule** taught Religious Studies and History at La Trobe University, and is now researching Christianity in China for the Ricci Institute, University of San Francisco, and Macao Ricci Institute. He is a former member of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council and the Melbourne Justice and Peace Commission.

**Director Dr Bruce Duncan CSsR** has lectured in history and social ethics at YU since 1986. He has written on issues of religion and politics, war and peace, and on economics, poverty and global development. His latest book is *Social Justice: fuller life in a fairer world* (Garratt Publishing 2012).