

JUNE 2017

# SPC News

SPC News articles can be read in full at [socialpolicyconnections.com.au](http://socialpolicyconnections.com.au)

## Where are our statesmen & women? Peter Whiting

Doubtless, it displays something of my vintage, when I find myself citing words written by that great economist John Maynard Keynes in 1933, reflecting on the road to recovery after the Great Depression. He wrote, "It is not an engineering problem or an agricultural problem. It is not even a business problem ... nor is it a banking problem. On the contrary, it is, in the strictest sense ... a blend of economic theory with the art of statesmanship, a problem of political economy". We each have our own sense of what 'statesmanship' is about, but for me, at least, it is about leadership, and about caring about people and outcomes.

**Tim Costello** laments the fact that Australian foreign aid has dropped to its lowest level ever, at 0.22% of National Income, with the announced reductions to lower this even further. He observes that what is needed is leadership and clarity of vision from those informed and competent to bring about a shift in budget priorities, and overcome the current mindset of negativity to foreign aid.

**Jason Davies-Kildea** finds the Budget has failed to give priority to one of the biggest drivers of poverty and disadvantage in Australia – the cost of housing. He calls for a national strategy to address this chronic social problem.

**Bruce Duncan** provides a useful summary of the Vatican document demonstrating the moral imperatives for change in local and international economies: "never has this call to protect the common good been so dramatic and immediate". This is a pressing call for increased statesmanship at all levels, but particularly for those nations which dominate the world scene.

Also in this month's newsletter, we address the state of Australia's relationships with China. **Joseph Camilleri** sees in the regional and global shift under way an opportunity for Australia to rethink its position. In light of tensions in Sino-Australian relationships which have emerged in recent times, this would seem most timely.

Many people would be unaware of the huge influence on the Second Vatican Council played by Canon Joseph

Cardijn, the Belgian priest who inspired the Young Christian Workers movement around the world. **Stefan**

**Gigacz** outlines the Cardijn influence, and particularly his friendship with Pope Paul VI, soon to be canonised by Pope Francis, along with the murdered Archbishop Oscar Romero.

Your support is invaluable to us

Unavoidably, budget considerations have an impact not only on the great economies and the humble household, but also on us here at Social Policy Connections (SPC).

Our Board has been actively addressing how we might extend the reach and impact of SPC, while operating within the budget constraints of a volunteer organisation like ours.

We are most grateful to those who support us through memberships and donations, and will shortly be sending our annual invitation to renew, sign up, or donate online. The SPC board looks at all times to direct our activities to ensure our limited resources are well used.



Bending the Arc of Poverty Featuring World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim and Chief Economist Kaushik Basu. World Bank Photo Collection. flickr cc.



Gun outside UN.  
JJ. flickr cc

SPC Forum  
Caesar D'Mello  
Is it time for a  
Just Peace framework?  
Thursday 21 June 7:30-

9pm

YTU Study Centre 34 Bedford Street Box Hill  
Donations welcome. Refreshments afterwards.

Recently returned from a meeting in France of Pax Christi International, Caesar D'Mello will talk on how church and other networks are questioning 'just war' thinking, and reconsidering non-violent methods for promoting human rights, social change, and sustainable peace. He is a consultant on development, peace and conflict, and the impact of mass tourism and climate change on the Global South. He has been director of the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism, Christian World Service, National Council of Churches in Australia, and is associated with many other groups.



Salvation Army adventure today. Anne Ruthmann. flickr cc.

## Budget fails struggling Aussies

Jason Davies-Kildea (Captain)

While the 2018 Federal Budget contains some positive initiatives, it fails to deliver on one of the biggest drivers of poverty and disadvantage in the country – the cost of housing.

Many Australian states and territories are doing their best with the resources

at their disposal. However, the problems we are experiencing in housing and homelessness must be driven by a national strategy, using the levers available to the Commonwealth Government, and ensuring funding is available to meet the scale of need now and into the future.



Poverty: a main driver of vulnerability. UN ISDR. Flickr cc.

## Vatican blasts inequality & greed for undermining human prospects

Bruce Duncan

The Vatican has launched a stringent critique of widespread abuses in global economies, driving astonishing degrees of inequality, threatening

ecological sustainability, and unleashing powerful reactionary political forces in response, as seen in parts of Europe and elsewhere. The title of the Vatican document *Oeconomicae et pecuniariae questiones* can be translated as "On Economic and Financial Matters".

The issues are keenly pertinent in Australia, as we see in the Australian Royal Commission into banking and financial services. Even in our hallowed financial institutions, there has been a corrosion of ethical practice and a culture of greed that has resulted at times in outright fraud and corruption.



Shanghai\_1. hans-johnson. flickr cc.

## Australia's China policy mired in phobia & confusion

Joseph A Camilleri

Australia's handling of its relations with China is rapidly descending into farce. Geoff Raby's recent excellent

piece in *Pearls & Irritations* makes abundantly clear the principal factor at work, namely a nostalgic attachment to the US-led regional and global order of previous years.

This is the mindset driving our security establishment, which, as Raby explains, comprises primarily Defence, ONA, ASIO, ISIS, the International Division in Prime Minister and Cabinet, and a range of think tanks which see themselves as the guardians of orthodoxy on security matters.



Cyclone Evan, 2012. Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade. flickr cc.

## The budget & aid

Tim Costello

At some point, either this Australian Government or the next one will be compelled to take seriously international development and the role of Australian aid. Development and diplomacy are effective (and cost-effective) tools for advancing the

region's prosperity and security.

A rich, skilled, and strong country like Australia ought to walk confidently in the world, and a rethink of the role of the development cooperation must be part of this. This demands leadership and clarity of vision, not just from politicians and the aid sector, but also from Australians working in many fields who can contribute their expertise and their voices to overcoming the mindset of fear and negativity that has bedevilled us for so long.



1965 Cardijn-Paul VI.

## Cardijn & Pope Paul VI: empowering young workers

Stefan Gigacz

With the canonisation of Pope Paul VI approaching in October, Stefan Gigacz outlines his collaboration with

Canon Joseph Cardijn in promoting the social activism of Catholic lay men and women, particularly the young. Stefan has just completed a major new study on Cardijn.

"Montini became well known for his close relationship with Cardijn and the YCW. "They say that I am a friend of the YCW. I accept it", he told a meeting of workers in Canada in 1951. "Perhaps I am not worthy of the title, but I want to deserve it, so I will try even harder to understand your work and support it", he continued.



A women's savings club in Nigeria. USAID/flickr cc by-NC.

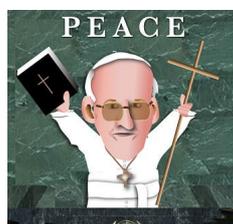
## Why microfinance as aid isn't enough to empower women

Sara Niner

Giving small loans to people for small household purchases or to invest in

businesses has been an integral part of Australian, American and other aid programs for decades. This is called 'microfinance', and the aim is not only to alleviate poverty, but also to empower women.

But simply improving a woman's economic situation does not necessarily increase equality. Increasing women's economic engagement often increases their work burden on top of all the unpaid labour they do. It can also challenge established gender roles and power hierarchies, causing conflict in the home, and even domestic violence.



Peace on You. Dan Youra. Flickr cc.

## YTU COURSE. Equity & Sustainability. Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, & the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Weekly lectures. Monday nights 6-9pm. 30 July-29 October 2018. Second Semester 2018. Enrolments 25 June-12 July.

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For an appointment, YTU Reception 03 9890 3771 #9 | [admin@ytu.edu.au](mailto:admin@ytu.edu.au).

This 12-week unit at Yarra Theological Union within the University of Divinity examines the convergence between Pope Francis and the program of the SDGs.