

Consider these principles

The permanent principles of the Church's social doctrine are the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity.

Human Dignity

We recognise the sacredness of life – the right to life from conception to its natural end – and the dignity of each individual as inviolable. In every person we see the living image of God. Each person, especially the most disadvantaged and marginalised, is entitled to more than just the basic necessities of life.

Common Good

We actively seek conditions that enhance the good of all and contribute to the common life of our society. Those made poor or experiencing marginalisation are a focus of special concern. Social values and structures that cause such disadvantage are questioned and challenged for the sake of the common good.

Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity is about ensuring that problem-solving and meeting responsibilities occurs at the appropriate level of society and protects against undue interference of higher authorities. Government has a role in supporting individuals, families and communities to fulfill the duties proper to them. Those most affected by policies have a right to participate in the decision-making.

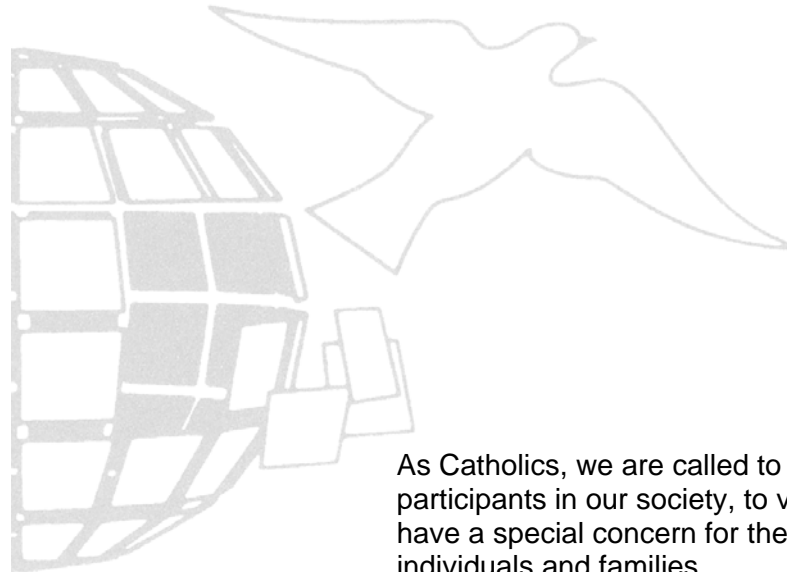
Solidarity

We recognise each person as our neighbor. The responsibility to care for others crosses national, racial, cultural, economic and ideological differences. We have a spiritual and material solidarity with all people and are called to give priority to those in greatest need.

For further information access the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church :

<http://www.cam.org.au/church-documents/compendium-of-the-social-doctrine-of-the-church.html>

A vote for social justice



As Catholics, we are called to be informed, active participants in our society, to vote wisely and to have a special concern for the most vulnerable individuals and families.

The Church does not tell us how to cast our vote, nor does it endorse any political party. Often, it can be difficult to judge which policies are the most consistent with Christian values, and people may legitimately disagree on such matters.

This leaflet aims to help you think about some important issues that will be decided in this election and offers some questions that you could raise with all candidates in your electorate.



Distributed by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, the national social justice and human rights agency of the Catholic Church in Australia.

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Fostering true partnership	Making ends meet	A place to call home	Welcoming the stranger	Care for the environment
<p>When the ‘Intervention’ into remote Northern Territory Aboriginal communities commenced in 2007, the Catholic Bishops of Australia urged caution and an approach that enabled Indigenous communities to be part of the decision-making process:</p> <p>‘We need to ensure the full range of culturally appropriate support services to address this issue and foster strong families and communities. The response must be respectful of Indigenous culture and identity, and must be undertaken in full and genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities themselves. History clearly demonstrates that effective solutions cannot simply be imposed from above.’</p> <p>Much more needs to be done to address the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. We need solutions based on genuine partnership, ensuring those affected have a key role in decision-making.</p> <p>QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES</p> <p><i>How will you work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to ensure effective consultation and participation in decision-making?</i></p> <p><i>What can be done in the electorate to help close the gap in Indigenous health, housing, education and employment?</i></p> <p><i>How will you ensure progress towards national reconciliation?</i></p>	<p>Economic development must not be at the expense of adequate protections for low-paid and unemployed workers. The growing gap between rich and poor needs to be reduced. Equity and justice need to be built into the market and not remain an afterthought. The economy needs to ensure social solidarity, generosity and compassion.</p> <p>The Church has consistently highlighted these challenges for decision-makers. Such considerations are most important in times of global financial crisis.</p> <p>Justice and concern for the most vulnerable must be at the heart of Australia’s ongoing response to the financial crisis. The circumstances of individuals and families reliant on low wages and income support provide an important basis to judge the adequacy of that response.</p> <p>QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES</p> <p><i>What are your strategies for lifting low-paid and unemployed workers out of poverty?</i></p> <p><i>How will you ensure families have sufficient means to create caring environments, welcome the sacred gift of life and provide a decent future for family members?</i></p> <p><i>What will you do to reduce the wealth divide in Australia?</i></p>	<p>On any given night, 105,000 Australians are homeless. Almost one-quarter of them are under 18. As the global financial crisis unfolded in 2008 the Catholic Bishops of Australia warned of the impact of homelessness on families and communities. Their 2008 Social Justice Sunday Statement observed:</p> <p>‘For most people, a house is more than just bricks and mortar. A house is a place of security, care of family and hospitality. For many people, there is no such place; these are people who are sleeping rough, or forced to go to refuges or seek shelter in rooming houses, cheap hotels and caravan parks.’</p> <p>Every Australian should have access to basic shelter offering the security that fosters human dignity and provides the basis for participation in the life of the community.</p> <p>QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES</p> <p><i>What are the causes of homelessness in this electorate and how will you address it?</i></p> <p><i>How will you improve community services and provide affordable housing in communities experiencing prolonged disadvantage?</i></p> <p><i>What are your strategies for preventing individuals and families falling through the safety net?</i></p>	<p>Australia sees only a tiny proportion of the 42 million people worldwide fleeing persecution or displaced by war or famine. The greatest burden is borne by developing countries. Australia is not being inundated by asylum seekers.</p> <p>The Catholic Bishops of Australia have called on political parties to avoid using asylum seekers as ‘political capital’ and to formulate a policy on the treatment of asylum seekers that does justice to their human dignity. History shows that Australia can be more compassionate in its response.</p> <p>Asylum seekers, regardless of whether they arrive by boat or plane, should have their claims processed according to international conventions. If it is decided legally that someone must leave Australia, it is vital that they are not deported to danger.</p> <p>QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES</p> <p><i>How will you ensure Australia meets its international obligations to refugees and asylum seekers?</i></p> <p><i>How will you encourage your community to accept and welcome refugees and asylum seekers?</i></p> <p><i>How will you ensure that unsuccessful asylum seekers are never deported to danger?</i></p>	<p>Australia is blessed with an abundance of natural resources. We have a responsibility to care for God’s creation, to use these resources sustainably, equitably and with reverence.</p> <p>In his 2010 World Day of Peace message, Pope Benedict XVI referred to the use of natural resources, saying:</p> <p>‘... we should be concerned for their protection and consider the cost entailed – environmentally and socially – as an essential part of the overall expense incurred’.</p> <p>He said we need to remember ‘the solidarity we owe to those living in the poorer areas of our world and to future generations’.</p> <p>There must be consideration of how the costs incurred and wealth generated in the development and use of natural resources can be shared more equitably.</p> <p>QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES</p> <p><i>How will you support the development of renewable energy sources?</i></p> <p><i>How will you ensure that the costs of carbon emissions reduction are spread fairly?</i></p> <p><i>What obligations should resource industries have to communities they operate in, and to Australian society as a whole?</i></p>