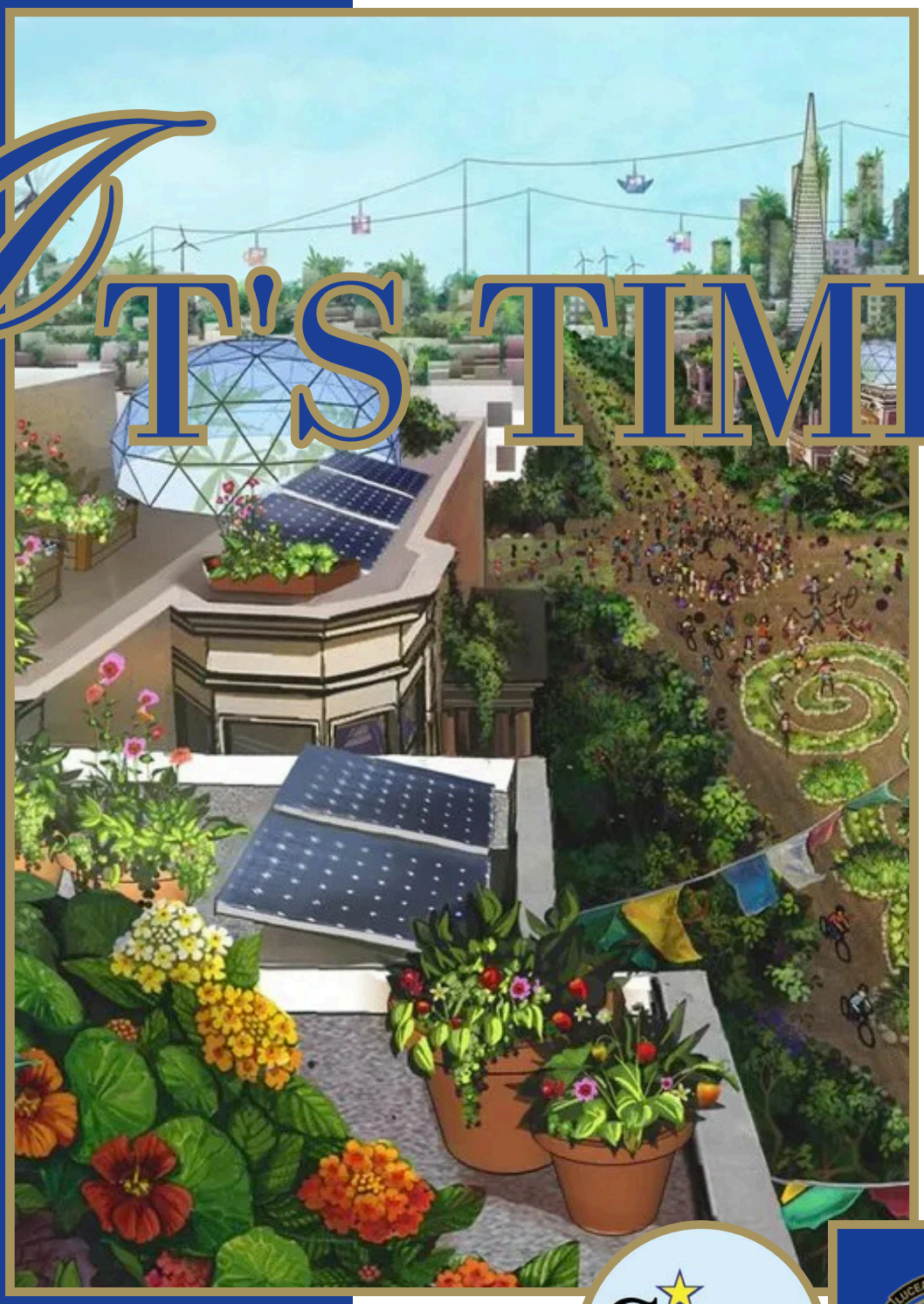
2025
SEMESTER 2

"You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbour." -Leviticus 19:15

IT'S TIME



Social Justice Action Group

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CONTENT

It's Time Introduction
By William Ters — 3

Everyone Deserves a Home
By Xavier Tan & Dash Nguyen — 5

SPC Christmas Appeal
By Mark Jabbour — 8

Speaking 4 the Planet – Climate Calamity Speech
By William Ters — 10

Using the Internet Ethically
By Christian Alam — 12

St. Vincent de Paul Servant Leadership Day
By Kristian Mattson — 14

Waverley Ecology Symposium
By Simon Nadine — 16

Papua New Guinea's First Saint: St Peter To Rot
By Roman Petrolo — 17

A System Under Strain: The UN, the U.S., and the Cost of Walking Out
By Benjamin Kalifa — 20

Men's Mental Health
By Nathaniel Hoang & Xavier Bartolillo — 23

Koalas – Are They Going Extinct?
By Thomas Sutunc — 25

Backyard Birds of Sydney: Why They Matter to All of Us
By Aidan Darlow — 26

Year 10 Justice and Advocacy Workshops
By Vincent Pappalardo & Juan Borg — 28

Refugees in Australia
By Pasquale Albanese — 30

Sydney's Cost-of-Living Crisis: Survival in a City of Dreams
By Sviatoslav Boichak — 32

Domestic Violence
By Sebastian Aziz — 33

The Human Cost of Silence in Palestine, Sudan, and Congo
By Xavier Amalan — 35

Do Video Games Cause Violence – And As A Result, Should They Be Banned?
By Michael Kotulski — 39

It's Time Introduction

Social Justice Destigmatisation

Recently, the phrase 'Social Justice' has been quite contestable, controversial even. It's increasingly had negative connotations, as if the idea of social justice is something undesirable, or unnecessary. And as the newly appointed Social Justice Prefect, this has been a notion that has confused and confounded me.

Maybe it's a disagreement on what Social Justice really is. To me, and what I hope is, to many, social justice is the pursuit of fairness and equality, ensuring everyone has equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources regardless of their background. But it seems that other people have their own idea of social justice. So why is the betterment of society such a challenging issue?

If I had to ask who the greatest social justice person was, who would you say? You might say Malala Youzfazi or activist Greta Thunberg (which, to be clear, are both undoubtedly groundbreaking activists that have had an immeasurable impact on the functioning of social justice). But maybe you said those names with some contempt or disdain. Why? Because Social Justice has been increasingly politicised. There are growing notions that the pursuit of social justice is something that is part of a greater political agenda; that one's support of social justice is somehow determined by where they sit on the political spectrum. I personally think those notions are ridiculous. As a result, social justice seems to be something that people opt out of. As if it's a light switch that they can simply turn off, and not think about, even in spite of growing knowledge and awareness of the issues that plague our national and global society.



To be clear, Social Justice is not, and will never be, something exclusive and restrictive. How do I know that? Simple. It's the answer to the question above - who is the greatest social justice person? The answer would be Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ uplifted the marginalised and those on the barriers of society. He preached inclusivity and acceptance for all, through his Beatitudes, (Matthew 5) and the Golden Rule, (Mark 12). He promoted the dignity of every person, regardless of social circumstance or status, such as cleansing the leper (Luke 5), or speaking to the exiled Samaritan woman at the well, (John 4). He critiqued oppressive and harsh institutions, such as the Tax Collectors, or expelling the money chargers in the temple of Jerusalem. After all, it was Jesus Christ himself who set the precedent for what modern day social justice is.



So if we attend Church, believe the word of God, and read the Bible, then how come some of us blatantly and unashamedly turn a blind eye on helping others? Why do some of us consider social justice to simply be a political ploy? Social Justice shouldn't be something negative or discarded - it should be something we all aim to live out.

William Ters
(Social Justice Prefect 2026)

Everyone deserves a home...

It was a lively morning in the city of Sydney. Everyone walking about, doing their daily activities, living their lives. Everyone around, thinking different things. "What am I going to do on the weekend?", "What should I get for dinner?", "Should I buy this?", "Should I buy that?", "Is it worth it?"... But in the heart of it all, in the centre of the great Sydney City, lies an honest man: Leo.

Now Leo is just like any other person. He had an education, a loving family, and everything one might dream for... but... on that night, everything changed. Leo's parents, a single man, and a simple bottle of alcohol turned Leo's life into a complete downward spiral. Leo's parents weren't exactly "well off"; however, they provided Leo with all the essentials for a growing boy. But on that night, all Leo had known was gone, and now he had nothing, no one, his life empty with nothing to rely on.



So, while everyone on the streets of Sydney on this morning were pondering upon these questions that so many deem 'insignificant', Leo was wondering something completely different: "Am I going to make it through this night?", "Am I going to eat tonight?", "Should I use my last dollars on this?", "Should I use my last dollars on that?", "Am I worth it?"

But on the other end of the stick... Mc D was a businessman who was extremely greedy. He would make scamming people through questionable exchanges a normal practice. He didn't give his victims a second thought – not if it was a single parent trying to support their young child, or someone in financial crisis, or someone who's already homeless. All he cared about was wealth... The way in which he got it was irrelevant to him.

Leo was looked down on among the public. Every day people walked past him acting like they didn't see him... sneering at his very presence, frowning upon his cup labelled "Please help!!!", but people barely even looked down, barely even noticing him on the curb of the street. Leo was constantly on the rough side of life, moving from place to place just looking for a safe spot to make it through the night, constantly being in fear of being beaten and robbed.

But the truth is Leo was not the problem. Society was. The way people turned their heads and pretended not to see him, the way comfort made them forget how valuable stability really is. Many were one unlucky month away from the same fate as poor Leo — a simple missed rent, a sudden dismissal, an unexpected hospital bill. Yet they lived as if their homes, their safety, and their lives were guaranteed...

Leo remembered his childhood bedroom. It wasn't big, just a small space with a desk messy and completely scattered with schoolbooks, a blanket folded neatly on his bed. He used to fall asleep to the sound of his father's television buzzing through the walls. At the time, he thought it was ordinary. Only now did he realise how extraordinary it really was — to close a door and know you were safe, to have a roof above your head that protected you from the cold, the wind, and the fear... of being alone.

Meanwhile, Mc D sat in his office on the top floor of one of his many skyscrapers, his windows going from the floor to the ceiling, giving him a view of the exact same city Leo walked through each night. But they saw it through different lenses. Where Leo saw cold concrete steps to sleep on, Mc D saw rising land prices. Where Leo saw faces that avoided his gaze, Mc D saw wallets to be emptied. Their worlds existed only metres apart, yet the distance between them was greater than oceans.

One afternoon, a storm spawned in Sydney. The rain pummelled against the streets and the temperature dropped to an all-time low. People hurried under umbrellas, taxis splashed water against the curb, cafés filled with an overwhelming number of people seeking shelter. Leo, however, had nowhere to go. He huddled under the canvas of a closed shop, his blanket soaked, his body shivering. For him it wasn't just a little rain — it was survival.

The rain passed... Leo had lost everything. The cardboard box he used as a mattress, the ragged jacket he had for warmth, and the blankets — the only thing getting him through the cold nights.



He sat there, trembling, staring at the rainbow. The streets were still wet, and the people were already back to rushing about their lives as if the night's storm had never happened. Then, from across the road, a familiar voice called out.

“Hey, are you alright?”

It was the owner of the small café on the corner. She had seen Leo around before, sitting outside her shop window from time to time. She walked over, holding a steaming cup of coffee and a small paper bag. “Here,” she said softly, placing them beside him. “It’s not much, but it’s warm.”

Leo looked up, his eyes wide with surprise. “Thank you,” he said quietly, his voice shaking. Over the next few days, the store continued to bring him food and small things he needed — an old jumper, a towel, even a blanket. One morning, she offered him something unexpected.

“If you’re up for it, you can wash some dishes in the café.”

Leo nodded without hesitation. It wasn’t just a job — it was a lifeline. Weeks passed. Leo started working regularly. He showed up early and worked hard. The regular customers grew to know and appreciate him. For the first time in years, people looked at him. The café became his safe place, a second home.

While Leo’s life slowly turned around, Mc D’s empire began to crumble. His lack of basic compassion caused everyone close to him to leave, the shady business deals caught up to him, and his entire business fell.

Now, instead of sitting high above the city, he walked the same streets Leo once did — alone, unnoticed, and empty. He still had a roof over his head, but no one to share it with. His wealth had bought him everything except happiness.

And that’s when the truth became clear. A home isn’t just walls and a roof... it’s safety and a sense of belonging. Leo had once slept on the cold streets, yet through kindness and community, he found a place where he was valued. Mc D, on the other hand, had all the money in the world, yet no warmth, no family, and no home in his heart.

Because a true home isn’t measured by riches or possessions, but by care and compassion. Everyone, no matter their past, their mistakes, or their struggles, deserves a place to feel safe, wanted, and loved. Everyone deserves a home.

Xavier Tan & Dash Nguyen
(Year 9 Students)

SPC Christmas Appeal

Although Christmas, for many of us, is a time of happiness and celebration, for some people, Christmas can be a challenging time. We are able to give back to those who aren't as fortunate as us. It is especially necessary this year that we give to those who aren't in the best situations, so that they can feel the sense of the Christmas spirit.

This year, our school partnered with five different charities to look beyond our own needs and recognise the inherent dignity within others. Each of these charities are focused on helping the powerless and those on the borders of society, who are often disregarded and unseen by many.

Those incredible charities each play a vital role in caring for those on the margins of society.



- **StVincent de Paul Society**
- **Jesuit Refugee Services**
- **St Merkorious' Charity**
- **A Women's Shelter**
- **Catholic Care**

The St Vincent de Paul Society supports families facing financial hardship by providing food, clothing, and essential assistance. Our assistance will enable them to provide families and individuals personalised gifts so they too can share in the joy of Christmas. Jesuit Refugee Services walks alongside refugees and people seeking asylum who are often left without stability or support and advocates for their basic human rights, whilst sharing the gift of Christmas with emergency relief. St Merkorious' Charity is a poverty and hunger-based organisation which provides access to healthy food, clothing and essential items for day-to-day living. This is followed by advice and referrals to services that can help the affected with their long-term goals. We are also supporting a Women's Shelter that offers safety and refuge for women and children escaping domestic violence and in desperate need of shelter, along with Catholic Care, which provides care and dignity for adults living with disabilities by supporting them with the celebration of Christmas gifts.

By contributing items to our Christmas hampers, the SPC community works together to bring comfort, dignity, and hope to individuals and families who may be struggling. Through this collective effort, we not only offer practical support but also live out our Christian values of compassion, generosity, and service, thus showing that the true meaning of Christmas lies in uplifting others and reminding them they are not forgotten.

We hope to make their Christmas that much more special and helpful through our gifts of compassion.

Mark Jabbour
(Year 11 Student)



Speaking 4 the Planet

Speaking 4 the Planet is an annual forum held by *Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay* which invites students to raise awareness about climate change and environmental impacts. One of the competitions that students can enter is speaking, where they have to present a speech.

Below is my speech:

Calamity: an event causing great and often sudden damage or distress; a disaster.
That's quite a strong word to describe our climate, right?

But it's the topic of today's Speaking 4 the Planet. Greenhouse Gases = Climate Calamity.

I could speak about how, according to the World Health Organisation, 'Earth's average surface temperature has risen significantly since the pre-industrial era, with 2024 being the warmest year on record.' Or I could speak about, that between '2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year, from undernutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress alone.

Or, how, according to the UN, "Without intervention, food system emissions will likely increase by up to 40 per cent by 2050, given rising demand from population growth, more income and dietary changes."

But the truth is, I was quite captivated by the connotation 'calamity'; the fact that this word is attached to 'climate'. Because in the past, when media outlets, organisations, and news articles cover and discuss the climate, the word 'calamity' is never attached. Maybe it's 'climate change', or maybe its 'global warming', or even "unprecedented transition".

The common thread between all these words is that they are all neutral - all euphemisms which trivialise an otherwise serious topic. Which is why when I saw the topic, I found the word calamity to be quite dire, and quite out of place - when, in actuality, it is a much more accurate label for our climate.



For context: a euphemism refers to a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant. They're used in everyday conversations, such as saying 'passed away' for someone who has died or 'let go' for someone who has been fired from their job.

But recently, in an increasingly politically metamorphising society, euphemisms have been increasingly used in climate and global warming discussions.

Let's consider the most prominent term 'climate change' - used in place of the word crisis, change has an objectively neutral tone, with no indication for positive or negative consequences. As put by the sustainability directory, "Euphemisms in climate discussions can obscure the urgency and severity of the crisis, hindering effective action".

These 'nicer' words soften the blow, mitigating alarm and distress. They are also used in political contexts, in an attempt to curtail public panic and protest. Furthermore, on a more severe extent, climate euphemisms translate to climate denial and rejection.

Now fear not, I'm not here to give a linguistics and grammar lesson - my point is that in an everchanging and polarising world, it is more important than ever to recognise the real horror of greenhouse gases. The climate crisis is something we need to address immediately, and words like calamity - no matter how out of place they may seem - help us realise that global warming is no longer a volcano in the distance, erupting out of reach, but something that is directly on our shores.

We need to wake up and smell the coffee, or in this case, feel the literal temperature increases in our everyday life. It's not just in overseas nations - we've seen the effects of greenhouse gases in the past few weeks, where extreme weather patterns, as accelerated by climate change, have caused sports cancellations, due to flooding and rain.

And simultaneously, despite being in what seems to be a very wet winter, across rural Australia, especially in Victoria and South Australia, a fodder drought is also occurring, reducing the availability of feed for livestock and crop cultivation. A country experiencing both flooding and a drought in synchronicity isn't a result of some happenstance or coincidence, but a result of the very greenhouse gas effects that the media decides to trivialise and ignore though the use of euphemisms.

When something interferes with our everyday life, when it causes widespread displacement, loss of life, economic disparity, and food insecurity, it is not a 'change' -
in better words it is a calamity.

William Ters
(Year 11 Student & Social Justice Prefect 2026)

Using the Internet Ethically

As users of the internet, we have the responsibility to use it ethically. Whether by accident or on purpose, it's easy to carelessly post people's sensitive information online, recklessly plagiarise other people's work and pass it off as your own or use generative AI as a shortcut to instantly complete your [synonym for work here]. After all, 42% of people upload personal information to their social medias every day, while 24% of high school students have been caught using Ai for marked assessments. This article aims to fix this by encouraging people to use the internet responsibly and in an ethical manner.

III, standing for Information, Intellect and Intelligence, is a simple acronym developed to assist in the ethical use of the internet.



- I – Information
- I – Intellectual Property
- I – Artificial Intelligence

The first I, standing for information, influences users' internet activity by ensuring they check for traces of personal information in their posts. While posting things about yourself isn't a concern, many posts contain images and info of other people that they did not consent to sharing. This can expose them to data leaks and other privacy concerns that they may not even be aware of, thus making it a necessary component of the acronym. In addition, AI and Large Language Models have been the main contributor to a concerning rise in fake news and hoaxes. In the past few years, AI has shifted the media environment. Moreover, the use of highly realistic deepfakes has curtailed public trust in reliable and genuine news sources.



The second I, acting as a shorthand version of intellectual property, encourages users not to plagiarise other people's work online. While it is easy and tempting to directly steal essays or artworks created by others, care must be taken to summarise, cut-out or properly quote work created by others when using it. Doing this permits the use of the work, while also properly crediting the original creator.



Finally, the third I. This is a shortened version of artificial intelligence, reminding users not to use AI for schoolwork or formal exams. Foremostly, the utilisation of AI harms the environment and depletes already susceptible and non renewable resources. Training and running AI language models requires significant amounts of electricity; energy which is sourced from unsustainable means such as fossil fuels. Furthermore, to both power and cool data systems, AI models consume a large amount of water, specifically freshwater – for context, freshwater sources only make up 3% of the Earth's water. Also, these data centres produce massive amounts of electronic waste, which contain hazardous materials, such as mercury or lead, contaminating local ecosystems. But it doesn't stop there – Unethical use of AI also has long term effects on individuals' intelligence and work ethic. Since AI completes our requests for us, we gradually grow an unhealthy reliance on it, dwindling our critical thinking and cognitive skills. A study by MIT concluded that, in three test groups, the one that used AI had the "lowest brain engagement and consistently underperformed at neural, linguistic, and behavioural levels". Moreover, both Forbes and MIT deduced that AI also makes recipients narrower minded – individuals produced tasks and reports that lacked a 'diverse set of outcomes for the same task', and 'lacked original thought, relying on the same expressions and ideas'.

Christian Alam
(Year 9 Student)

St. Vincent de Paul Servant Leadership Day

On the 5th of November, I was lucky enough to attend the St. Vincent de Paul Servant Leadership Day at ACU North Sydney, with the focus of unpacking the 2025 Australian Catholic Bishops Social Justice Statement: "Signs of Hope on the Edge: Serving People Living in Homelessness and Mental Ill-Health."

We heard from many speakers but most notable was John Finneran, a member of our College community. He presented frightening statistics about homelessness such as how the number of rough sleepers has grown by nearly 70% in five years from 1,314 in 2020 to 2,192 in 2025. These numbers significantly consist of young Australians with ages like senior students with about 40,000 of young Australians seeking homelessness support in 2023.



Mainly the day focused on the correlation between homelessness and mental illnesses. Mental illnesses, such as anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, can increase the risk of becoming homeless due to difficulty maintaining employment, studies, routines, or stable relationships. Between 2022 to 2023 one third of people in homelessness communities were suffering mental illnesses and one quarter were facing difficulties with single parenting. Throughout the day we explored the scenario single parents must face: whether to pay bills or put food on the table for their kids? Questions that most of us are fortunate to not have to worry about.

It is from this that we discussed how homelessness is a problem that is easy to ignore as we often prioritise the wants of the rich rather than the needs of the poor. However, Pope Leo stated "No Christian can regard the poor simply as a societal problem: they are part of our family: they are one of us." It was through this that servant leadership was presented to the students in the room. Servant leadership refers to a leadership approach where the leader's primary goal is to serve others first, prioritising the needs, wellbeing, and dignity of vulnerable people before their own. We as social justice advocates were prompted to focus on human dignity, creating options for the poor, the common good, solidarity and the participation in which we can create a better community.

Our final remarks focused on how we may seem different but really, we are extremely similar it's our experiences and opportunities that separate us. Thus, homelessness can happen anywhere and to anyone.

To learn more you can go to Signs of Hope on the Edge: Social Justice Statement 2025-2026 or to put servant leadership into action you can become a Vinnies Volunteer today and make a difference in your community.

Kristian Mattson
(Year 11 Student)



Christopher Vidal - The Plight of the Homeless in the Heart of Affluence

Waverley Ecology Symposium

On the 30th of November 2025, Mrs Lonard, my peers, and I attended the annual Ecology Symposium at Waverley College. This symposium saw 150 students from 13 schools across the Sydney metropolitan area, some of which were also EREA schools such as St Pius X and Christian Brothers Lewisham. This enlightening event had a theme focused on "Think Globally, Act Locally," underlining how big changes start small, and was organised by the students of the World Ecology Group at Waverley.

The aim of the symposium was to empower young people to be active citizens through a variety of dynamic speakers who were all well-versed in the realm of sustainability. Lottie Dalziel, the founder of Banish—a company that aims to reduce Australia's waste and ecological footprint—started the day with a captivating session on how she started her business and the issues with sorting rubbish and recycling it into new products.

Following this, we heard from an expert panel moderated by Julia Zemiro, who spoke on environmental advocacy and included figures such as Costa Georgiadis, Majorie O'Neill, Kal Glanznig (2025 Australian Youth Representative for the United Nations), Satara Uthayakumaran, and Sophia Skarparis. The discussion shed light on the difficulties facing environmental justice. We also heard from a selection of PhD candidates from the University of Sydney who showcased some of their work that they will implement to create environmental change.



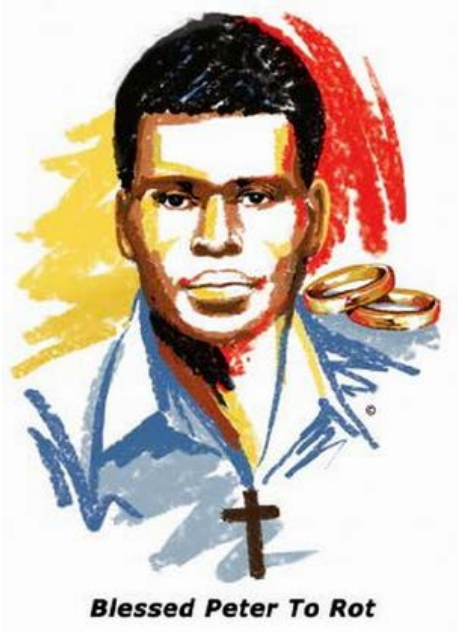
For lunch, the Waverley Hospitality students used low-impact, environmentally ethical ingredients and seeds from IndigiGrow to supply the food for the day. There was a lovely selection of kangaroo sliders and other delights.

This day communicated an important message to all young people regarding ecological challenges: we can turn concern and disappointment into action, no matter the scale of the challenge.

Simon Nadile
(Year 11 Student & Sustainability Prefect 2026)

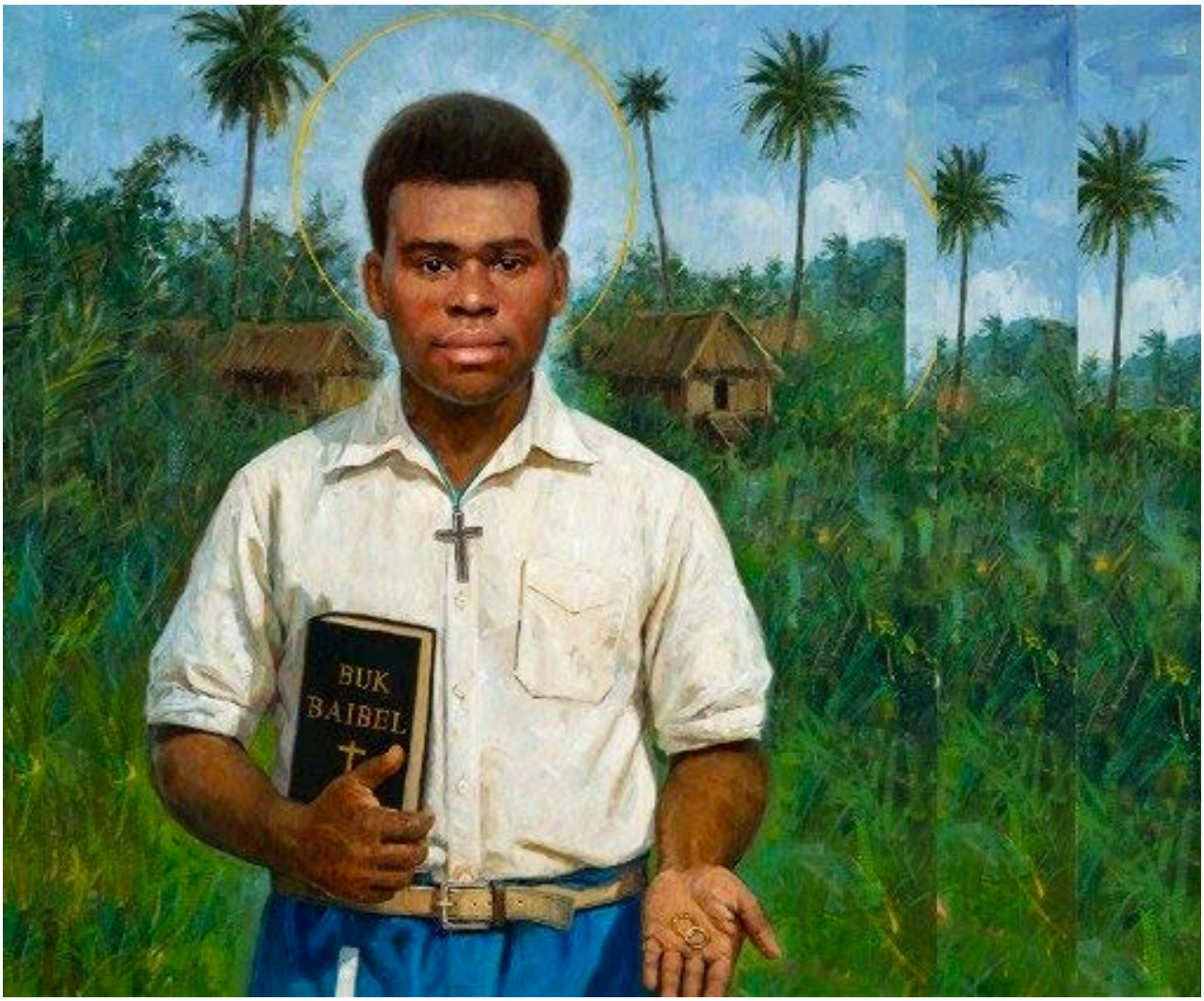
Papua New Guinea's First Saint: St Peter To Rot

As of October 19, Papua New Guinea has had their first saint canonised, Blessed Peter To Rot. Peter To Rot was a catechist, not formally a member of the clergy, revered for his dedication to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and upholding of the sanctity of marriage.



Blessed Peter To Rot

Peter To Rot's family was among the first to be evangelised in Rakanai, his hometown of Papua New Guinea. His father was none other than the faith leader of local people, and his baptism was a defining gesture of acceptance of Christianity for the people of Rakanai. This moment marked the renunciation of all the practises of witchcraft and cannibalism.



As a child, Peter To Rot was raised in an atmosphere of faith and charity. He was described as often helping to lead components of daily Mass, eventually entering the school for catechists at age eighteen. Despite not formally being a member of the clergy, Peter To Rot acted as a significant spiritual leader, carrying out much of the role of a priest. He baptised and catechised others, visited and prayed for the ill, and took food to other missionaries and prisoners of war.

During 1942, when Peter To Rot was carrying out his ministry, Papua New Guinea was invaded by the Japanese army. The Japanese Empire soon attempted to imprison all missionaries, and it was catechists such as Peter To Rot who played a vital role in sustaining the faith and spirituality of the region. He worked to keep celebrations of the church and the dispensation of sacraments alive amidst occupation, leading up to the eventual banning of all practises by the Japanese militia.



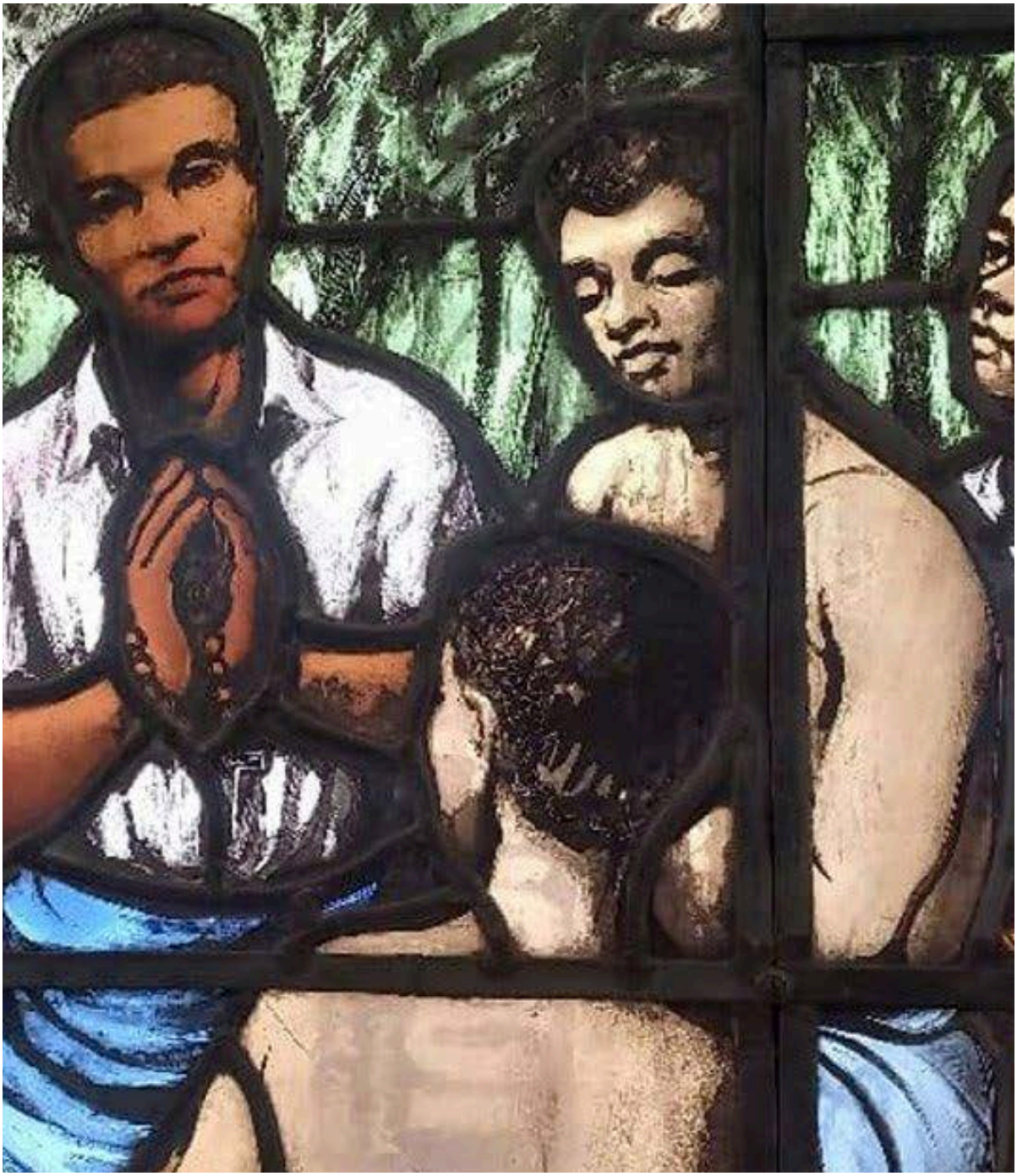
Despite this, Peter To Rot continued, making the commitment to continue to proclaim the Word of the Lord among the persecuted. This culminated in his detainment and release, causing him to continue his ministry in secret and under the cover of nighttime. As the war drew to its end, the Japanese sought to revive traditional Papuan customs to gain favour, leading to the reinstalment of polygamy.

In dedication to the sacrament of marriage, Peter To Rot began his 'open crusade' against polygamy, confronting powerful members of the public who engaged in the act. This led to his arrest, where at trial he reaffirmed his stance against polygamy. He was later killed without proper conviction by lethal injection in April 1945.

Peter To Rot was declared a martyr on the 2nd of April 1993 and was beatified on the 17th of January 1995 in the presence of Pope John Paul II in Port Moresby. He was approved for canonisation this year by Pope Francis, following the medical recoveries of two women from life-threatening ailments.

St Peter To Rot teaches us much of the sanctity of marriage, with his dedication to the sacrament amidst persecution from the Japanese and dissent from other Papuans demonstrating what true strength looks like as a Christian. He exemplified unwavering faith and presents the zeal for which modern Christians must continue to strive with.

Roman Petrolo
(Year 11 Student & Faith Formation Prefect 2026)



A System Under Strain: The UN, the U.S., and the Cost of Walking Out

What the U.S. Withdrawal from UN Agencies Says About the Future of Human Rights



Following an executive order signed by President Donald J. Trump, the US withdrew from multiple international councils' agreements. Initially just the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR), and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), but the move was followed by a withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement and, UN endorsed Iran Nuclear Deal. The actions of which has sparked political controversy and questions around the world on what this means for the propagation of social justice. But why has this become a present reality? Well first an inspection of the UN's establishment is required.

The UN's composition in October of 1945 was a move established by WWII allies US, UK, USSR, France, and China. The committee was set to replace its ineffective predecessor the League of Nations. It became a successful 'global watchdog' due to US participation, with the goal of preventing future global conflicts, and promoting international peace and security. The organisation developed more subsidiaries such as the UNHCR to further target injustice across the globe. However, this was a council regularly opposed by the US amid fears of politicalisation and bias. The 43rd President of the United States George W. Bush has previously boycotted the human rights council when it was first established in 2006, until 2009 due to concerns about the council's credibility. Human rights abusers like China, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela were present on a council aimed at combatting their own actions, limiting the ability it had to effectively evoke change. Obama accepted US election to it in 2009 acknowledging the best way to improve it "was from within". Since then, the 46th President Joe R. Biden Jr. paused funding amid concerns of human rights violations, and President Trump withdrew from it in 2018 and now 2025 again.



What's the core reason? Well, all three administrations who at one point or another opposed the council cited an alleged bias against Israel as the major reason. Every U.S. opposition was primarily driven by a perceived antisemitic action or nature of the council, and consequently a move against the US as Israel is a major ally. Trump illustrates this in his justification "I've always thought the UN has great potential, but it's not living up to that potential right now" (- President Donald J. Trump on UN subsidiaries perceived to be exhibiting antisemitism).

These claims are not baseless as the UN has a history of disproportionately focusing on Israel after the nation neglected its division of the Israel/Palestine region, and UNRAW was found to have members who supported and/or were part of the October 7th attacks. Fuel to the fire is only added when the UN regularly scrutinises the US on human rights, singling the nation out on immigration, military actions, refugee policy, and border issues. Combined with the increasing weight placed on the US as a global superpower to settle international disputes overseen by the council, the neglect of other abusive nations, and the US funding a large summation of the organisation, the withdrawal reflects a growing belief that some UN institutions have drifted from founding goals and harmed U.S. interests or allies. Aligning with the US's broader developing policy, of unilateral (without the agreement of others) influence.

Nonetheless, there are valid arguments against the true motives of US withdrawal. Notably in leaving the committee the US is no longer accountable for its own human rights abuses. Deplorable actions such as the use of the death penalty, cuts to refugee protections, discriminatory entry policies, and military intervention, are all easily ignorable if the US is not a member. It also sets a precedent that human rights aren't a priority if it means inconvenience, leading multiple nations to condemn the withdrawal from US councils, due to global repercussions and consequences outside of the US. Like it or not the U.S. is one of the few countries with political weight to push back on abusive regimes.

Without the U.S. inside the Council, it immediately becomes easier for problematic governments - those with track records of torture, censorship, and political imprisonment - to dodge accountability and continue in perpetrating social injustice.

To surmise, the US withdrawal exposes the harsh reality of a system under substantial strain. Both arguments can be true at once. Pouring resources into a flawed system isn't a sustainable way to create change, yet stepping away only weakens human rights across the world and conveniently shields the US from scrutiny. Whether this is a wake-up call for reform or the catalyst of deeper fragmentation will shape the fate of countless lives.

Benjamin Kalifah
(Year 11 Students & Inclusive Community Prefect 2026)



Men's Mental Health

Men suffer under harsh social restrictions and limitations. They are often expected to be 'tough' or 'masculine', perceived to be the 'man of the house', figures required to make the most money, to be superior. Eventually, these unattainable expectations metamorphise and converge, creating toxic and abusive ideas of masculinity.



However, has anyone considered what men want to be seen as?

Many men around the world and Australia take their own lives due to the immense pressure of living up to the expectation of being masculine. Men are disproportionately represented within suicide rates - 75% of people who die by suicide are men. Moreover, men are 3 times more likely to take their own lives than females.

Part of the blame for this is the aforementioned expectations and restrictions of men. Men have been encouraged to suppress their feelings, to not be emotionally honest and to not open up. However, over the years a movement called 'Movember' started in 2003, created by Travis Garone and Luke Slattery. This awareness campaign was then formalised in 2004 and has now grown into a non - profit organisation supporting both men's mental health and prostate cancer research.

The Movember foundation is a global charity dedicated to supporting and raising awareness of men's health. Movember focuses on physical health like testicular and prostate cancer, and mental health like suicide prevention and common mental health issues. Every November, men around the world grow out and maintain a moustache, while women can help support and promote men's mental health, through movement.



The rules of Movember are to start off the month clean shaven and grow a healthy moustache to help raise awareness. Movember was founded back in 2003 in Melbourne Australia, where 30 friends all banded together to bring back the moustache. Coincidentally, one of the friends' mums were raising money for breast cancer awareness at the time, so they decided to connect the challenge to men's health specifically.

The project quickly grew and soon it partnered with the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, where it became an annual event for raising funds. Since then, the movement has spread to many different countries with millions of different contestants, also raising awareness, and encouraging men to take action.

Nathaniel Hoang & Xavier Tan
(Year 8 Students)

NB - While men's mental health is an extremely important issue it is not a social justice issue. It is a health and wellbeing issue. (Note from the Editor)



Are Koalas Becoming Extinct?

Koalas are perhaps the most recognisable symbol of Australia - renowned for their distinct and cute appearance and their low energy lifestyles, they are beloved by many.

However, recently, as Australia is growing more susceptible to the effects of climate change, as seen through the devasting bushfires of Summer 2019-2020 and long periods of droughts (2006, 2018-19), Koalas are becoming increasingly threatened.

In 2020, the Legislative Council inquiry into NSW koala populations and habitat concluded that, without action, koalas in New South Wales could be extinct by 2050.

Koalas in New South Wales face a range of threats, including habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation, climate change, disease, declining genetic diversity, vehicle strike, bushfire, and animal attacks.

What Can We Do?

There have been many projects to try to save koalas. One of these is known as the "Strategic Koala Tree Planting Project" where a location named "Campbelltown" is planting 20 million trees to revegetate land found in designated core koala habitat. The Government is also providing $10 million in community grants to help local communities with safety measures. The National Koala Monitoring Program partners with First Nations peoples and universities to understand the status and trends of koala populations.



How To Know If A Koala Is In Trouble!

There are signs that a koala could be in trouble, such as:

- **Dazed Appearance** - Having a hard time climbing and not responding.
- **Malnourishment/Illness** - Having saggy skin or their shoulder blades or spine being visible through their fur or evidence of wounds.
- **Infection** - They have a yellow to black bottom (Normally, a koala's bottom is white and grey)
- **Other Signs** - Having rusted or red eyes or a brown, dry-matted coat.

If you do find a koala in trouble, feel free to call the ***"Friends of the Koala Rescue Hotline"*** opened 24/7 on 6622 1233.

Thomas Sutunc
(Year 9 Student)

Year 10 Justice and Advocacy Workshops

On the 19th of August 2025 Year 10 took part in the Justice and Advocacy Forum where we attended workshops held by charities to educate us on certain communities and the struggles that they face in their daily life. Below are just two of the workshops.



One of the workshops that students attended was held by Catholic Mission. Catholic Mission Australia is the Pope's international mission agency in Australia, and part of a global network of Pontifical Mission Societies operating in over 160 countries. Their work involves partnering with communities globally and domestically to help them grow and develop. They also partake in grassroots projects in areas like healthcare, education, and faith formation.

At the Catholic Mission workshop students were asked to act out certain contemporary issues of injustice. In one of these situations, three people got to sit on chairs while the rest had to sit on the floor. The people who were on the seats got to eat biscuits and the people on the floor were only provided with dirty water, and if they spoke out against this injustice, they were sent to a corner in isolation.

This demonstrated to students about the inequality of wealth and recourse distribution in the world with the top 1% of the world's population controlling half of the world's wealth. This workshop further shows that the majority of the world has inadequate access to basic human necessities like clean water and food. This workshop modelled repression and criminalisation of rebellion along with how marginalised the more vulnerable are to disciplinary systems.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a Catholic charity that helps people suffering from poverty, homelessness and social disadvantages. Their work focuses on offering practical support, compassion and advocacy to improve people's lives.

At their workshops, students were taught about the struggles experienced by those suffering from poverty and low socio-economic status. They were challenged to make a 3-course meal for a 4 people household with only a budget of 50 dollars. Students did this using Woolworths magazines to find the most cost-effective manner of household meals.

This workshop demonstrated the struggles of low-income families in finding enough food to feed their children. It taught students the importance of cost effectiveness by using Woolworths magazines to compare prices and to show how people experiencing financial hardship must constantly search for the cheapest options, specials and discounts just to afford basic groceries. The workshop encouraged teamwork, planning and creative thinking to meet difficult challenges that are valuable in everyday life.

Vincent Pappalardo & Juan Borg
(Year 10 Students)



Backyard Birds of Sydney: Why They Matter to All of Us



Female Red Tailed Black Cockatoo
Photo by Aidan Darlow

If you stop and listen during recess, you might hear the chatter of rainbow lorikeets, the laugh of a kookaburra across Breen, or the soft calls of magpies high above. Here in Strathfield we are lucky, our suburb is full of native trees that make it a true haven for Sydney's backyard birds.

But these birds aren't just pretty or fun to watch. They're vital to both the environment and us. Birds pollinate plants, spread seeds, and control insects which are all essential for healthy ecosystems. In fact, over 80% of native plants in Australia rely on animals, including birds for pollination. But not only are they important to nature, it turns out that spending time observing or listening to birds can also reduce stress, improve concentration and increase happiness levels!

Sadly, many birds need our help, with 1 in 6 Australian bird species at risk of extinction, with most critically endangered birds even lacking a recovery plan. Even in Sydney the superb Fairywren, Bell Minor and the Powerful Owl, are surviving off the ever-shrinking amounts of native trees and bush shrubs. Urban development, invasive species, and pollution are all putting pressure on backyard wildlife.



Without stricter protections, our local birds like Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, which is still found in Sydney's outer suburbs and nearby bushland is threatened from habitat loss through vegetation clearance and urban development, logging and fragmentation of native bushland. These birds rely on old, large trees for roosting, nesting and feeding, and once the habitat goes, they go with it. They can't wait, they need our help. What can we do as a school?

As a school we can help by caring for existing native trees and planting more bird friendly species like grevilleas, banksias, and bottlebrushes such as those planned for the native garden at Waterford house. Bird baths, nesting boxes and most importantly education are also crucial to help care for these birds as a community.



Male New-Holland Honey Eater
Photo by Aidan Darlow

What You Can Do at Home

At home, we can create bird friendly spaces by planting native shrubs, avoiding chemical sprays, keeping cats indoors, and leaving some parts of the garden 'wild.' Even small actions provide food, water, and shelter for our feathered neighbours. This encourages all types of birds such as honeyeaters, kookaburras and parrots to not just survive, but thrive in urban environments. Every bird we see is a sign that our environment is alive and healthy. By caring for local wildlife and supporting national protections, we help ensure a future where birds continue to brighten our mornings, gardens, and lives.

Aidan Darlow
(Year 10 Student)



Refugees In Australia

"What would you do if you had to leave your home overnight with no guarantee of safety? For thousands of Australians that have arrive in Australia each year this is reality"



A refugee is someone who has been forced to leave their home due to war, violence, or persecution. They are unable to return home safely so they seek protection, also known as asylum in another country.

In Australia thousands of refugees settle through humanitarian programs. Many refugees come by plane and few by boat. They usually come from countries like Afghanistan, Syria, Myanmar and South Sudan. Although they are safe in a new country, many refugees face challenges in day to day life, that include language barriers, finding housing and jobs discrimination and long waiting time for visas. They may also experience trauma from war and conflict from their home country.

Refugees make important contributions to Australia's economy and society. Many start small businesses, take up essential jobs in positions like health care, trades, and agriculture. Refugees also strengthen and build local communities by bringing new languages, cultures and traditions. Many become volunteers, students and workers who give back to the country that has offered them safety. They are helping to shape Australia for what it is becoming.

One organisation that plays an important role in supporting our refugees in Australia is the House of Welcome. They provide safe accommodation, food and essentials for people who have nowhere else to go. The House of Welcome also offers English classes, job support and community programs that help refugees build a new life in Australia. Their work shows how community-led support can make a real difference for people starting again in a new country.



Personally, I have worked a lot with the House of Welcome organisation, along with the Josephite Justice Network and the Josephite Action Group. As volunteers we help by cleaning and repainting houses for newly arriving refugees in Australia. We also organise welcome days and weekends where refugees have opportunities to meet new people and enjoy having a break. One of my favourite activities is our Welcome Weekend where volunteer are placed with a family so we can teach them new things and provide any help. It is also a great experience to meet new people and stay in contact with these families it gives them an opportunity to meet others outside of their normal community.

Refugees come to Australia in search of safety, but they bring much more than their stories of hardship. They contribute to the country through work, culture, and community, and organisations like the House of Welcome show how support can help them rebuild their lives. By understanding their challenges and recognising their strengths, we can create a more welcoming and fair society. In the end, supporting refugees is not just an act of kindness it helps Australia grow and become a more diverse and compassionate nation.

Pasquale Albanese
(Year 10 Student)



Sydney's Cost-of-Living Crisis: Survival in a City of Dreams

Sydney. Once seen by many as among the most affordable cities, the current cost of living crisis paints a different picture. Underneath the pristine high rises, dealing with necessities has turned daily life into a constant struggle. Households in the city's suburbs are continually facing the same issues: rising rents, escalating grocery prices, and hefty utility bills. The feeling of exhaustion is common among all – the continuous budget recalculating, essentials cutting, and living with the silent fear of the next expense is for families, students, and pensioners alike.



The escalating demand is primarily experienced in the accommodation sector. Renting a property in Sydney is now at the highest level ever and finding a place to rent becomes more difficult every day. The landlords are completely in control because the vacancy rates have dropped so low. For the younger population, owning a home is no longer a dream that they can aspire to; instead, it is seeming impossible, thus changing the whole perspective of city life.

The crisis is further aggravated by food inflation. The price of essential items like bread, milk, fruits, and vegetables has increased and as a result, families must limit their food intake and thus, become less healthy. Utility bills arrive as menaces, and every one of them is a reminder that comfort, brightness, and communication can be snatched away in a moment. Rich transport costs, particularly for those commuting from Sydney's outer suburbs, also gobble up already limited budgets.

The figures reveal one situation, while the human effects reveal another. The residents of Sydney are not just taking care of their finances, they are keeping their dignity. Parents make their children share, seniors are constantly worried if their small pension is going to be enough, and students give up their autonomy just to stay in crowded flats. The whole crisis is diminishing not only financial security but also the emotional cohesion of the city.

Sivi Boichak
(Year 10 Student)

Domestic Violence

Content Warning: This article contains content about domestic violence that may be triggering or traumatising to some readers.

Learn and grow.

As a community we are plagued by the inhumane matter that hurts others, causes havoc and rips families apart.

1 in 4 women, 23%, 2.3 million people in Australia have experienced violence by a partner since the age of 15. To look more closely at our country's statistics; 16.3% of women have experienced economic abuse. 22.9% of woman have struggled emotional abuse and 16.9% of woman have suffered with outright violence.



Plainly, this is wrong.

The scars of domestic abuse run deep. It seeps into the consciousness of the victims, leaving them with painful, traumatic and psychological horror. But the damage is unforeseeably greater than expected. Children exposed to domestic violence and abuse have a higher risk of contracting problems such as anxiety and depression. Although increasingly worse, a percentage of men who commit domestic violence are likely to have witnessed or struggled with domestic violence in their childhood.



That is the underlying cycle. We as young men must learn from the mistakes of the abuse and grow into nurturing and respectful good people.
To do this we actually need to acknowledge the abusive issue. A 2021 study found that 1 in 4 Australian men do not believe women are more likely to sustain physical harm from domestic violence. We must break free of these notions and see the pain that can emerge from this mindset.

As men we have a responsibility to not only be strong but caring for the women in our lives. The Bible states, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25). A simple yet perfect word from our Lord, this should direct us as men to grow into better people.

Yes, domestic violence is a prevalent issue on the rise, but we are not powerless to do something about it. If we learn and grow and put our faith into action, then this cycle of violence will end. Yes, you can advocate and shout for change but putting faith into action also means to just do the right thing; and treat others fairly.

Sebastian Aziz
(Year 10 Student)

The Human Cost of Silence in Palestine, Sudan, and Congo

Palestine has lived under occupation and displacement ever since 1948. Over 700,000 Palestinians were made to flee their homeland during the formation of Israel. Over 500 villages were destroyed. Refugees numbered in the millions. "Nakba" means "catastrophe" in Arabic, referring to this disaster.



Israel occupied the West Bank, Eastern Jerusalem, and Gaza in 1967. Withdrawal from these territories was called for in United Nations Resolution 242. United Nations Resolution 242 has yet to be adhered to. More than 700,000 Israelis now inhabit occupied territory. Palestinians remain under military rule, with restrictions in movement, property, and water.

It has a population in excess of two million people. It is blockaded. It is controlled by Israel regarding its borders, airspace, and sea lanes. It has been described by the United Nations as an unlivable environment. It is estimated by UNICEF that half its inhabitants are children. According to World Health, physicians practice in threatening conditions.



UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) offers refugees education, food, and shelter. Airstrikes have affected UNRWA schools, offices, and other facilities. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and B'Tselem have each concluded that Israel's policies fulfill the legal definition of apartheid.



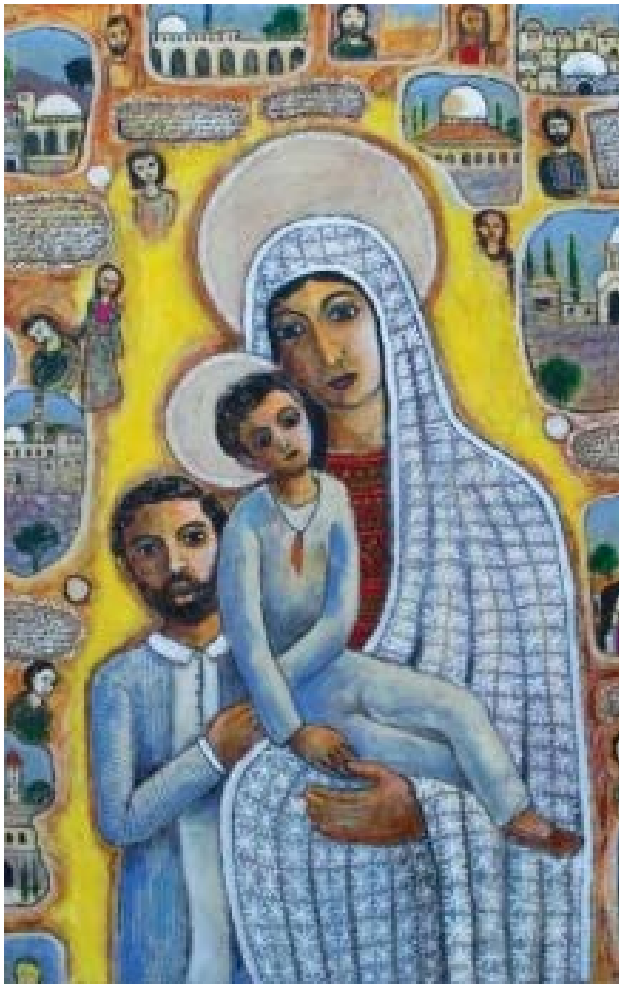
The Church in Gaza is still providing for all people. Approximately 1,000 Christian believers are left in the region. The Church of Saint Porphyrius offers shelter to families with no regard to their religion. Civilians died in an airstrike in 2023 inside the church grounds. Members of the clergy chose to remain to provide assistance to those injured.

Christian institutions in Jerusalem have been harassed and have had their properties seized. Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem have denounced such actions. "Our faith teaches us to be with those who are oppressed," they said.

"War is always a defeat for humanity," said Pope Francis. "To carry out attacks on civilians is war, something beyond war," he added. "The Holy See is in Favour of a war based on justice, on equality." Caritas Internationalis and Aid to the Church in Need deliver food, medication to families in Gaza.

These reports usually present it in such a way: it's a battle between equals. It's not. One party has military power, airspace, resources, while the other party doesn't have any army or any control over its borders.

Criticism of the Israeli government is not antisemitic. "Traditional antisemitism is about Jews, not about Israelis. It seeks to destroy Jews as Jews." Jewish Voice for Peace, which is composed mostly of Jews, has called for major protests for a ceasefire. They believe "Safety for Jews can't come at the cost of Palestinian freedom."



Islamophobia spreads misinformation about Palestinians. Many have been called terrorists, denying their suffering and humanity.

Boycott, Divest, Sanctions is a movement in which peaceful support is employed to obtain equality, freedom, and other such rights for the Palestinians. This too is based on the model in which apartheid in South Africa ended. The United Nations Human Rights Council, Amnesty International, or Human Rights Watch call Israel's treatment in each place apartheid. Genocide in Gaza is presently being examined by the International Court of Justice.

Oxfam, Save the Children, and Caritas are still aiding affected civilians. Reports from these groups indicate that most victims are either children or families.

What's happening in Palestine isn't in isolation either. Sudan is experiencing mass killings due to clashes between armed groups. Over 8 million refugees have been displaced, with more than 25 million in need, according to reports from the United Nations. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, violence involving mining and armed groups has resulted in thousands of deaths. Millions have also been displaced due to these conflicts.

"We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians," said Nelson Mandela. These words apply to all those living under oppression.

Christians are called to act. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, now divided by walls and roadblocks. "The Gospel urges us to act, not to be silent," Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa said. "The cross calls us to be on the side of those who suffer."



1. You have a role.
2. Learn from reputable sources like UNRWA, Amnesty International, and Jewish Voice for Peace.
3. Correct mistaken information whenever you notice it.
4. Sponsor humanitarian efforts via Caritas or Medical Aid for Palestinians.
5. Oppose antisemitism and Islamophobia
6. Advocate for support for non-violent resistance through boycotts.
7. Stay updated on crises in Sudan and Congo.
8. Contribute to disaster relief efforts via United Nations programs in these countries.

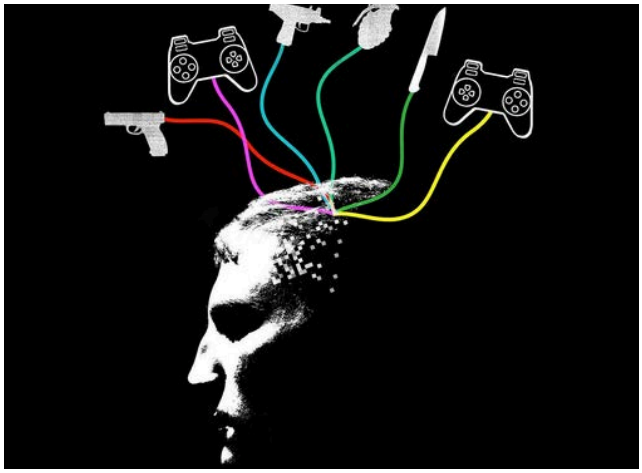
"Knowledge is power." Use it to defend life, to demand justice.

Xavier Amalan
Year 10 Student



Do Video Games cause violence – and as a result, should they be banned?

It's an age-old question, that's appeared in forums, discussions, posts and webpages ever since the first video game with violence, Death Race, a 1976 arcade game was released. A large aspect of the problem is not causation but correlation - just because two variables happen at the same time, that doesn't mean they impact one another or have any relation.



While this debate metamorphises every few years with the release of another mainstream, blockbuster game, it also has social justice ramifications that largely go unnoticed. Why is this the case, you might ask? Video games become a scape goat for actual and legitimate reasons and factors behind accidents and issues.

The use of stereotyping allows the media and politicians to completely ignore the root cause, instead creating fake reasons and justifications that hinder truth and damage communities. In this way, video games have served as a fail-safe scapegoat for social fears and worries.

Let's take the Sandy Hook school shooting as an example. This tragedy was the deadliest school shooting in the U.S and one of the deadliest mass shootings ever. What should've been a keystone event that would've pushed for more amendments to gun laws and mental health bills instead to led to a widespread scrutinization of video games. It was not the perpetrator's mental health that was called into question. It was not the perpetrator's toxic masculinity and social circumstances that were called into question either. Likewise, it was not even the gun laws and the convenient availability and accessibility of firearms in Connecticut that was called in question. Instead, it was whether the video games, a form of entertainment, that perpetrator Adam Lanza encountered that was debated and vilified.

Obviously, it would be remiss of me to create a blanket statement and say that video games have absolutely ZERO relation to any forms of violence. For instance, reports show that in the short term, video games can possibly lead to heightened aggression and anger. That being said, in the long term, there are no credible ramifications of video games on violence.

Ultimately, the debate that Video Games Cause Violence redirects attention to real injustice issues and events. It hinders progress and solutions to actual issues, such as gun reform, and mental health support.
Nonetheless, caution should be used when considering playing video games.

Michael Kotulski
(Year 9 Student)

