

When you vote on 21 May, will your vote help realise this vision of God's kingdom?

Australia, a leader among nations, combines generosity with wise and good stewardship, consisting of communities of justice, compassion, inclusion and mercy

Here are a prayer and some things to consider about six visions (in no particular order) that will contribute to this overarching vision.

- **Please read and share these resources – and if one or more of these issues strikes you as important, we encourage you to find out your local candidates' views.**

The Public Issues Commission, Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, has prepared this material, based on election publications from the Anglican church, [Anglicare](#) and other [major Church welfare providers](#), the [Catholic](#) and [Uniting](#) Churches of Australia. In addition to the linked publications, [Common Grace](#) has further useful guidance and resources to help discernment during this important time.

Visions

- **A Welcoming, Compassionate and Diverse Nation: Safety for Refugees and Asylum Seekers**
- **Renewal of the Whole of Creation: Action on Climate Change**
- **A First Peoples Heart: Voice, Treaty, Truth**
- **Flourishing communities: Economic participation and housing for all**
- **An Inclusive and Equal Society: Health and Ageing to our Full Potential**
- **Contributing to a Just and Peaceful World: Humanitarian Assistance and Foreign Policy**

Prayer for the election (adapted from Australian Catholic Bishops Conference)

God of this land and of every people,
who shapes all things according to your own design
and writes your law in every human heart:
we thank you for this country we call home,
from the First Nations people to others born here
and those you have gathered from across the earth.

We pray for the citizens of our land in this troubled time,
that we may be committed to justice,
to the dignity of each life,
and to solidarity with all Australians and with the world.

Guide all who seek election to serve the nation;
may the Holy Spirit inspire them to pursue a better politics
that is wise and courageous and governs for the good of all.

May all of us see and hear you in the most vulnerable,
that we may respond to the cry of the earth
and the cry of the poor,
that we may respond to you.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Vision 1: **A Welcoming, Compassionate and Diverse Nation: Safety for Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

Bishop Carol Wagner pointed out at the Palm Sunday Rally that at a time when the numbers of refugees across the globe are increasing exponentially, our government has actually decreased the number of refugees we will take. There has been a loss of more than 28,000 places over the last two years. Further, we spend more than \$470,000 a year PER PERSON on hotel quarantine, or \$362,000 a year PER PERSON in a detention facility, and have spent over \$7 million on denying one family - the Murruguppan family from Biloela - permanent residence.

[40 Anglican Bishops](#), in writing to our major party leaders, stated that “We continue to pray for all those who are displaced in our world, and that our Nation’s response will be as generous as possible”. Catholic Bishops state that “We need a just, humane and timely system for assessing claims for asylum”.

Churches’ calls include:

- A target for Afghan and Ukrainian refugee resettlement much higher and appropriate to the magnitude of the problem, and permanent protection for Afghan people already in Australia on temporary visas.
- An end to mandatory and indefinite off-shore and on-shore detention either in Alternative Places of Detention (hotels) or detention centres.
- Community detention of refugees and asylum seekers must allow access to education, work and housing support.
- Enhanced safeguards for people on temporary visas including overseas students and migrant workers.

Vision 2: **Renewal of the Whole of Creation: Action on Climate Change**

[Australian church leaders](#) wrote an open letter at Easter calling for more action on climate change: “Churches along with other institutions in civil society and the business community must examine our own practices so we can help reverse damage to the climate. We commit to this action, in particular to support and protect marginalised communities and First Nations people who are on the frontlines of these dramatic environmental changes.

As our political leaders continue their election campaign this Easter, we welcome them to our churches and call on them to take powerful action to preserve and protect God’s creation.”

Australian Catholic Bishops say: “We need a holistic, long-term vision for the future – not just a vision for the economy but a vision for Australian society, the human community and the whole earth community”. They state that “the social, economic, health and ecological dimensions of the current environmental crisis must be addressed by a new integral ecology”.

Churches call for:

- Halving carbon emissions this decade, in line with the recommendation of scientists and targets of our major trading partners.
- Transforming our energy system towards 100% renewable electricity while delivering a planned and just transition for energy workers.
- Investing in programs to support communities on the frontlines to plan, prepare and adapt to the extreme weather events.
- Australia to play a significant role in our region and globally in addressing the causes and impacts of climate change, responding to the call from Pacific countries, including the Pacific Conference of Churches, for our country to act more decisively to reduce carbon emissions.

Vision 3: A First Peoples Heart: Voice, Treaty, Truth

[Australian Anglicans](#) have long supported constitutional recognition of First Nations peoples. Catholic Bishops say Constitutional recognition and active steps towards reconciliation are fundamental moral issues. The Uniting Church has a vision of us as “First and Second Peoples, [walking] together, creating socially just and culturally safe relationships, listening and learning from one another”.

Churches and the major Church providers (including Anglicare) call for:

- Constitutional change to enshrine a First Nations Voice to Federal Parliament.
- Recognition of the sovereignty of First Nations and establishment of a commission for treaty making, truth telling, justice and reconciliation
- Sufficient funding to achieve the Closing the Gap targets, prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to deliver services wherever possible.

Vision 4: Flourishing communities: Economic participation and housing for all

We are called by Jesus’ example to respond to human need and injustices in our society. [Anglicare’s](#) identity and mission reflects this.

The Uniting Church states “In the midst of the challenges we face, we encourage current and future leaders of our country to work with courage and commitment, and to work collaboratively with communities, to provide all people and all of God’s creation with every opportunity to flourish and to live life abundantly”.

Anglicare Australia points out that “Over three million Australians live in poverty, and wealth inequality is now the worst it has been in seventy-five-years”. It adds that “Our own research shows that Australia forgoes \$68 billion each year in subsidies to the wealthiest Australians. If we can afford to forego this revenue, then we can surely afford a safety net, a secure home, and a dignified life for every Australian”.

Churches and the major Church providers (including Anglicare) call for:

- A human-centred economy that allows all people to flourish and provides them the support they and their families need, including a job creation program
- An increase in Centrelink payments, especially Jobseeker, to above the poverty line.
- An investment in affordable and social housing, including in the regions and rural areas (e.g. create 500,000 affordable homes including social and Aboriginal housing)
- Tax reforms to increase the progressive nature of the Australian tax system to address unhealthy inequality.

Vision 5: An Inclusive and Equal Society: Health and Ageing to our Full Potential

In their election letter, major church providers declare “we believe that every human being is equal. Our Christian faith teaches us that every one of us is made in the image of God. We believe that every one of us is worthy and deserving of love and dignity. The same faith that compels us to provide care and support to whoever needs it, compels us to advocate for something better – for

systemic and structural change that addresses the underlying causes of the hardships we see every day.”

Churches and the major Church providers call for:

- A clear commitment to make sure all parts of the aged care system have adequate funding.
- Fair wages for aged care workers.
- Improved mental health support for people in rural and remote Australia that is adequately funded, able to be flexibly used and well managed locally.
- Ensuring that the NDIS delivers on its objectives.

Vision 6: Contributing to a Just and Peaceful World: Humanitarian Assistance and Foreign Policy

Pope Francis calls for “A better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the Common Good”, recognising the cry of the earth, and the cry of the poor, worldwide. We are among the richest nations in the world, and can provide financial and moral leadership in how we act on with our neighbours.

Anglican Overseas Aid aims for “Life. Abundantly. For all”. Its [CEO, Jo Knight, noted](#) in the context of the election that “In my years with foreign aid I’ve seen that particular area decline constantly ... We can and must demand a hopeful future ... at the end of the day our politicians work for us and we need to call them to account”.

The Uniting Church in Australia has called for Australia to:

- Centre Australia’s foreign policy on a commitment to justice and peace; collaborating internationally to deliver community development and human rights.
- Legislate Australian Aid to reach 0.5% GNI by 2026 and the world target of 0.7% GNI by 2030.
- Increase support to fight COVID globally.
- Sign on to the global treaty banning nuclear weapons.
- Increase support to vulnerable nations to help address the impact of climate change.