

CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

CLRI (NSW)

ABN: 52 476 362 010
Member of the Catholic Church Religious Group

Senator Andrew Bartlett
Parliament House
Canberra 2600

1 March 2006

Dear Mr Bartlett,

I am writing on behalf of CLRI (NSW) Social Justice Committee, a group that represents more than 3,000 religious men and women in NSW. The Social Justice Committee works for justice for all in our society, especially those who are marginalised and unable to make themselves heard in the public domain.

I am writing to you in your capacity as holding the portfolio of Environment. We are very concerned about the Australian Government's failure to sign the Kyoto Protocol, commit to binding emission reduction targets and timelines and recognise environmental refugees. We commend the Democrats on their support for the signing of the Kyoto Protocol and commitment to the reducing of greenhouse gas emissions. We commend your acknowledgment of the growing number of environmental refugees in your press release dated 2 December 2005 but seek clarification as to the Democrats stance on Australia's role in recognising and accepting environmental refugees.

In a conversation with the Democrats office in Canberra we understand that while you have spoken out on these issues, this has not become Democrats policy as the Democrats policy concerning climate change and in particular environmental refugees has not been rewritten since the 2004 Election. We are writing to ask that you give significant consideration to including this in your revised policy.

We are concerned by the rising numbers of environmental refugees who are not currently recognised under the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees nor under our domestic legislation. In addition to reducing the greenhouse gases that are causing global warming, we believe now is the time to act at both the national and international level to address the issue of environmental refugees. An ethical response from Australia is required in regards to the pressing issue of global warming, particularly as Australia, is one of the world's highest emitters of greenhouse gases per person.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Yours Faithfully,

Liz Snell
For CLRI (NSW) Social Justice Committee

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

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