



CATHOLIC JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

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Media Release

Tuesday 4 September 2018

Australia Must Support Action on Climate Change and West Papua at PIF Leaders Summit

Australia must listen to the demands of the peoples of the Pacific on two vital issues, climate change and West Papua, at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Summit being held in Nauru this week, according to the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

The Commission's Executive Officer, Peter Arndt, said that Australia cannot ignore the demands from Pacific leaders for Australia to make a firm commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly.

"Serious problems are already confronting many Pacific countries because of climate change and the Australian Government should not push the concerns of Pacific leaders aside," Mr Arndt said.

"We need a full blooded commitment to a swift transition to renewable energy by the Australian Government," he said.

"Pacific leaders have told us that we cannot keep mining coal and other fossil fuels if we are to avoid immense problems for Pacific countries including Australia," he said.

"Australia can transition quickly to renewable energy at the same time as it addresses electricity price problems and seeks to create sustainable employment opportunities in regions like central and northern Queensland," he said.

Mr Arndt said that the peoples of the Pacific also want the concerns of their sisters and brothers in West Papua to be addressed at the PIF leaders summit this week.

"Australian Prime Ministers have had a habit of telling other Pacific leaders to be quiet about West Papua," he said.

"Our new PM, Scott Morrison, was in Jakarta last week making deals with the Indonesian President about trade, but will not stand up to the Indonesian Government on the continuing conflict in West Papua," he said.

"We need action at the United Nations to address the on-going human rights violations committed by Indonesian police and soldiers in West Papua," he said.

"The fundamental desire for self-determination by the people of West Papua also needs to be respected and taken to the UN by Pacific countries," he added.

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“The Australian Government must stop being the bully of the Pacific; We should not keep shutting down discussion about taking the issue of self-determination for West Papua to the UN,” he said.

“Australia should stop being selfish; we should not be looking after ourselves at the expense of the peoples of the Pacific and of West Papua,” he said.

For comments and further information, please contact Peter Arndt on +61 409 265 476.