



## Submission No 12

### **Inquiry into Australia's aid program in the Pacific**

**Organisation: Catholic Women's League Australia**

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15<sup>th</sup> June 2006

The Secretary of the Committee,  
Joint Standing committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade,  
Inquiry into Australia's aid program in the Pacific,

Please find submission attached from the Catholic Women's League of Australia  
Inc.

The author is happy to attend any public hearing.

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**Catholic Women's League of Australia Inc.**

**JUNE 2006**

**Submission to:**

**Joint Standing Committee on  
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade**

**INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S AID PROGRAM IN THE  
PACIFIC**

**Contact person: (Mrs.) Betty Roberts OAM,  
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Members of Catholic Women's League Australia Inc. applaud Australia's aid to the island countries of the South Pacific

- its strong commitment to the efficient and **responsible management of human, financial and natural resources**
- the continuing focus on improving governance and accountability at regional, national and local levels
- flexibility and innovation in approaches to deliver **development outcomes**.  
Aus AID Pacific Program Profiles 2003-04

We are interested in providing the islanders with basic health services, particularly vaccination programs to protect entire populations against infectious diseases such as poliomyelitis measles, rubella, hepatitis, mumps, tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough. Screening for tuberculosis, provision of anti malarial medication, dental services, substance abuse programs, ophthalmic services and the training of midwives and other para-medical personnel could greatly improve the health and well being of islanders.

**We are saddened to hear of moves to channel some of the money into the provision of abortion services. Abortion harms women physically and emotionally, destroys a unique new life, deprives society of the many talents that the aborted person is endowed with, leaves deep emotional scars on both biological parents and damages that cradle of life, the family, where we each learn to become human.**

**Abortion changes the demographics of a nation. It is not in the interest of these island people or their unborn children to reduce their populations through abortion services financed by Australian AID.**

South Sea Islanders rightly see their children as their wealth. The family brings them joy and provide their health and aged care plan. We foresee that an abortion and contraceptive mentality will result in these people joining the many nations or groups of nations lacking sufficient numbers of young people to renew their population eg Europe, Japan and Australia. The demography of China is seriously affected by the one child policy that has left a serious imbalance in the ratio of males to females and millions of men unable to find wives. There are raids across borders to procure women who are often kidnapped and forced into prostitution to "service" the bachelors.

A wedding is the simple dream of millions of young men in rural China but the reality is there are no longer enough girls to go round. Modern China is booming – but behind the success is a problem because, 25 years ago the Chinese government decreed that couples should have just one child. The policy stopped the country's spiralling birth rate but Chinese tradition means couples want to have a son and not a daughter, the result – millions more boys are now born each year than girls. The Chinese government admits that if the trends continue, by the time these boys are ready to marry there will be over 40 million more men than women. In a country with no benefit system it leaves nobody to care for the aged.

Attention is increasingly focused on the social and economic consequences of too few babies. The New York Times 30.4.'06 commented on the case of Ogama, a village in rural Japan that has declined to only eight elderly residents. Town members have decided to pack everything up and

sell the site to a company that will turn it into landfill. Sixty years ago the village had around 30 households, each with eight to nine people. Ogama belongs to the municipality of Monzen, which has 140 villages, 40% of which have fewer than 10 households, mostly composed of elderly people. Japan's aged pension has been reduced by 25% due to a reduced tax base.

The Guardian newspaper 3.5.'06 reported on the plunging birthrate in Europe where the German government has decided to increase financial incentives to have more children. "We've completely failed to react to the fact that Germany's birthrate has been galloping downhill for the last 30 years," commented Rolf Wenkel in an opinion article published March 16 by Deutsche Welle. One in three children under 6 in Germany is an immigrant child but even relatively high levels of immigration will not solve the problem.

In Russia the number of children per woman plunged from 2.19 in 1986-7 to 1.3. Some forecast a fall from a population of 146 million in Russia to only 100 million by mid century. Australia's birthrate is well below replacement level at 1.7 and the government is at pains to find incentives to child bearing.

Pope Benedict XVI notes that the causes of low birth rates are multiple and complex. But while they are often economic and social, the "ultimate roots can be seen as moral and spiritual..... a disturbing deficit of faith, hope and love." A deficit not readily fixed by economic policy.

A recent book examined some of the implications of these changes. "The Baby Bust: who will do the work? Who will pay the Taxes? (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers) is edited by Fred Harris. In their chapter on Europe, Hans-Peter Kohler, Francesco Billari and Jose Antonio Ortega observe that the demographic changes will have profound social effects. Fewer siblings and increased childlessness diminishes the potential of family networks to provide social and economic support.

Institute for Family Policy, Press Release 9<sup>th</sup> May 2006 provides excerpts from their "Report of the Evolution of the Family in Europe 2006" presented to the European Parliament and I quote: *Every 33 seconds one divorce and one abortion takes place in Europe, equivalent to one million broken families and one million abortions every year. Europe today is an ageing continent – there are more over 65s than under 14s; fewer children are born and there are one million abortions annually, which, along with cancer, is the main cause of death in Europe.*

Complete study at – [www.ipfe.org](http://www.ipfe.org)

We put three questions based on the aims of the AusAid Pacific Program quoted at the beginning of this submission.

In light of what is happening in other countries, would funding Abortion Services be **responsible management of human, financial and natural resources?**

The people are surely every nations greatest resource. Is providing the means of killing unborn generations, a **development outcome** we seek to deliver?

**Can abortion ever be construed as AID?**

Chaim Potock, noted Jewish Author says "those who kill a child destroy a nation"