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Earlier editions of UNity 2004-05, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 are also on the UNAA website:

[www.unaa.org.au](http://www.unaa.org.au).

## **A. UNITED NATIONS & AGENCIES**

AusAid and Defence take urgent supplies to Pakistan. United Nations agencies including **the World Food Program (WFP), UNICEF, the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNHCR, UN Population Fund (UNFPA)** and **United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC)** are caring for 14 million people affected by the floods in Pakistan..

## **B. CLIMATE CHANGE and ENVIRONMENT**

It was left to the CEO of World Vision, **Tim Costello**, to call for a broader international perspective than addressed by either political party. In *The Canberra Times* he wrote, "Whoever wins the election must ensure that Australia does not just engage with the international community when it suits us..."

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The annual United Nations Association of Australia Media Peace Awards 2010 are seeking nominations in many categories.

## **G. OTHER NEWS**

Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says he is looking forward to contributing to action on climate change as part of his appointment to a United Nations panel, the ABC reported on August 10.

## **H. ARTICLES IN FOCUS**

Earlier this year Megan Davis created history by becoming the first Australian Indigenous woman elected to a United Nations body. **James Giggacher** writing in the *ANU Reporter*, looks at the inspirations and hopes behind what is already a remarkable career.

## **I UNAA matters**

UNAA's national conference in NSW Parliament House theatre was held today, August 13.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE COUNTDOWN**

Australia's Chief Scientist Penny Sackett, in March 2009, said the world had only six years to radically lower emissions or face calamitous, unstoppable global warming. **This week there are 243 weeks left in which to radically lower emissions.**

## **A. UNITED NATIONS & UN AGENCIES & NGOS**

### **Updated 13 August 2010**

In a joint operation, AusAID and the Australian Defence Force will deliver two plane-loads of essential supplies to assist thousands of people affected by the extensive flooding in Pakistan. The first flight left Amberley airbase on August 13.

Supplies include tents, tarpaulins, generators, water storage containers and water purification tablets. The tents and tarpaulins will help 10,000 families and the water containers and tablets will provide 30 days of safe drinking water for approximately 12,500 families.

Australia has also provided 2000 birthing kits, including gloves and soap that help to maintain a clean birthing environment in difficult conditions. These supplies are in addition to Australia's assistance of \$10 million to the following organisations:

- \$4 million to the **UN World Food Programme** to support the distribution of food;
- \$2 million to the **UN-managed Pakistan Emergency Response Fund** to support the delivery of food, shelter, and basic health services to affected areas
- \$2 million to **the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement** to meet immediate needs including food, shelter and water
- \$2 million to non-government organisations **ActionAid Australia, Care Australia, Oxfam Australia, Save the Children Australia and World Vision Australia**. These Australian NGOs are already working to support the crisis response in Pakistan.

Australia is one of the leading donors in response to the disaster.

**The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs** reported on 9 August that 14 million people are affected by the floods. According to Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority this number could rise to 15 million.

Preventing water-borne diseases is a priority. The UN says that a 'second wave of death and disease' is possible if immediate needs are not met. Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority is leading the response, working closely with the Pakistan military and humanitarian agencies. Australia is also participating in the United Nations Disaster Assessment mission currently underway in Pakistan.

### **Pakistan: unexploded munitions moved by floodwaters**

Geneva (ICRC) – Three young children were seriously wounded in Dera Ismail Khan this week by a homemade bomb that detonated when one of them touched it. The device was apparently dislodged from its original position by floodwaters before the children came in contact with it. This tragic incident is a reminder of the risk posed by explosive remnants of war and the additional danger caused when they are moved by floodwaters.

This added, man-made danger comes on top of a natural disaster which has now affected some 14 million people. Officials from the United Nations, its agencies and NGOs in the field are agreed that as disease, lack of medical treatment, lack of shelter increase the estimated death toll of 1700 is expected to rise significantly.

The use of booby traps and makeshift bombs, and the presence in some areas of mines and unexploded ordnance, remain a real threat to the unwary.

"All persons living in areas affected by fighting – or in adjacent areas subject to recent flooding – should be aware of the risk posed by explosive remnants of war," said Luiza Khazhgerieva, an **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** mine-risk education specialist. "Areas that may once have been considered free of weapons can easily be re-contaminated when mines and unexploded ordnance are carried into them by floodwaters." Children are especially vulnerable.

Food and shelter items for more than 100,000 people have been dispatched from the ICRC's logistics hub in Peshawar in the last week for distribution by Pakistan Red Crescent volunteers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. In addition, medicines and medical supplies have been sent to Paroa Hospital in Dera Ismail Khan and to Bannu.

## **UN seeks funds for aid to Pakistan**

United Nations aid agencies and their partners are seeking almost \$US460 million to help millions of people affected by floods that have cut a swathe through Pakistan. **John Holmes, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator**, at the launch of the humanitarian response plan at UN Headquarters in New York, said, "The death toll has so far been relatively low compared to other major natural disasters, but the numbers affected are extraordinarily high. If we don't act fast enough, many more people could die of diseases and food shortages."

Shelter is an urgent priority and \$105 million of the \$459.7 million sought is required to provide tents or plastic sheeting, as well as basic household goods, for an initial target of more than 2 million people, according to the **UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**.

More than 65,000 tents have already been delivered, covering at least 450,000 people, along with plastic sheets for an estimated 60,000 people.

Up to 6 million people across the country are in need of food aid which is estimated to cost \$150 million, while \$5.7 million will be needed to ensure the survival of livestock. The **UN World Food Programme (WFP)** and its partners have so far delivered more than 4,350 tons of food to at least 370,000 people, including in the remote Swat Valley, which had been cut off from assistance until last week.

Clean water will be provided to approximately 6 million people to prevent the risk of waterborne diseases from emerging. Some \$110 million is required to fund efforts to provide water to those affected by the floods. More than 1 million others have already received clean water thanks to the **UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)** and its partners.

About \$56 million will be required for emergency health care, covering potentially up to 14 million people, while \$14 million is needed to ensure proper nutrition for children under the age of five, and for pregnant or lactating women.

## **The UN agencies**

**WFP** is already delivering food and is planning to have reached 2 million people with food by August 20. Some communities will need assistance for a short period only, but many will likely need help for at least three months.

WFP is appealing for \$US163 million for food and logistics/emergency telecoms support to respond to the crisis. WFP has enough food in-country to provide a one-month ration for the needs of 6 million people (the overall flood affected population deemed in need of food assistance).

WFP has already received confirmed contributions of US \$13.2 million (as of 10 August) - urgent donor support is required to make the necessary purchases which will ensure steady supplies beyond August.

WFP has re-started helicopter operations to deliver food supplies into the upper Swat valley. Bad weather had prevented helicopter deliveries earlier to areas where about 600,000 people have been cut off by flooding. At any one time, WFP currently estimates that it has at least 200 trucks moving food around Pakistan to deliver assistance to flood victims. Donkeys are also being prepared in a bid to reach the most remote communities who cannot even be reached by helicopter.

To ensure a steady supply of wheat flour to the flood operation, WFP is increasing the number of mills it uses from 12 to 20. A swift response has been made possible by the deep field presence of WFP and its partners – with 19 humanitarian hubs (with some food stocks) and a network of national and international NGOs.

**UNICEF** is appealing for \$US47.3 million to fund its relief operation in Pakistan with 1.4 million children affected by the flooding

**The World Health Organisation (WHO)**, the scale of the emergency means more medical supplies will be needed. Other urgent needs identified by an initial assessment conducted by UN agencies include:

- providing psychosocial support to the affected population;
- hygiene promotion interventions – providing water purification tablets, safe water, water chlorination;
- tents for temporary health facilities;
- strengthening the referral system to higher levels of health care; and
- vaccination campaigns.

**UNHCR is dealing with** “... one of the most difficult we have ever faced,” said Mengesha Kebede, UNHCR representative in Pakistan. “We are smack in the middle of a catastrophe, people in need are everywhere, some routes are blocked, and even when we deliver tents some people may lack dry land where they can be erected.”

Across the country, Pakistan's Federal Flood Commission puts the number of homes destroyed or damaged at more than 300,000, with more than 14,000 cattle dead and 2.6 million acres of cultivated land under water. So far some 1,600 people have been killed, but many millions of Pakistanis and Afghan refugees have been affected by the flooding.

“UNHCR's main relief work has been in the north where flooding has been most severe. Normally our work there is geared towards Afghan refugees and conflict-displaced Pakistanis, but in this instance we are working equally for all affected communities, both Pakistani and Afghan,” Mengesha Kebede said,

**UN Population Fund (UNFPA)** Responding to the worst flood to hit Pakistan since 1929, UNFPA has rushed supplies to help with childbirth, as well as the health and hygiene of displaced people, particularly pregnant women and infants. An estimated \$350,000 additional funding is needed to address the urgent reproductive health needs of the affected communities for the next three months.

**UNDAC: United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC)** team is a stand-by team of disaster management professionals who are nominated and funded by member governments, OCHA, UNDP and operational humanitarian United Nations Agencies such as WFP, UNICEF and WHO.

Upon request of a disaster-stricken country, the UNDAC team can be deployed within hours to carry out rapid assessment of priority needs and to support national Authorities and the United Nations Resident Coordinator to coordinate international relief on-site.

The UNDAC System consists of four components:

1. Staff: experienced emergency managers made available for UNDAC missions by their respective governments or organizations, together with OCHA staff. UNDAC Team members are specially trained and equipped for their task
2. Methodology: predefined methods for the collection and management of information, assessment as well as structures for coordination support during the first phase of a sudden-onset disaster or emergency
3. Procedures: proven systems to mobilize and deploy an UNDAC team, so that it can arrive within 24 hours at any disaster or emergency site anywhere in the world.
4. Equipment: adequate personal and mission equipment for UNDAC teams to be self-sufficient in the field when deployed for disasters/emergencies.

<http://ochaonline.un.org/OCHAHome/AboutUs/Coordination/UNDACSystem/>

**Sources and more information**

<http://www.reliefweb.int/>

<http://ochaonline.un.org/OCHAHome/WhereWeWork/Pakistan/PakistanFloods/tabid/6844/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

## Other crises in the world

Only weeks before the flood crisis in Pakistan, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund allocated \$US41 million to nine underfunded crises where people are suffering the effects of hunger, malnutrition, disease, and conflict.

The funds are for United Nations humanitarian agencies and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and through them to partner organisations, including NGOs, to cover funding gaps in key humanitarian projects in the affected countries.

The countries where the UN agencies and NGOs are involved include Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Yemen; the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK); Central African Republic, Djibouti, Eritrea and the Republic of Congo and Nepal

Source: [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#)

**UNICEF** has joined **WHO, UNFPA, WFP and UNHCR** in sending urgently needed supplies to thousands of people affected by Cameroon's worst outbreak of cholera since 2004, but remains deeply concerned about the plight of women and children in the area. The current outbreak has to-date caused over 2,000 confirmed cases of cholera resulting in 155 deaths. This constitutes an extremely high fatality rate of 13.16 per cent.

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## B. CLIMATE CHANGE and the election

### Tim Costello on foreign affairs

Foreign Affairs got a brief exposure at the National Press Club on August 12 when Foreign Minister Stephen Smith and Opposition spokesperson Julia Bishop competed for attention. Ms Bishop promised a new minister for international development within the Department of Foreign Affairs. And she suggested Mr Smith would have to give way to Kevin Rudd if Labor was re-elected.

For his part, Mr Smith said replacements for the two parliamentary secretaries responsible for the Pacific Islands and for International Development Assistants would occur once the election was over. Both said their parties were committed to more aid.

It was left to the CEO of World Vision, Tim Costello, to call for a broader international perspective. In The Canberra Times (August 9, 2010 page 9) he wrote, "Whoever wins the election must ensure that Australia does not just engage with the international community when it suits us –we have to be part of the difficult conversations too. The Copenhagen Climate Change meetings were a setback, but Australia must continue to work with the international community towards a fair, ambitious and binding global climate change agreement by the end of 2012.

"In December we get our next chance, when UN climate change talks resume in Cancun, Mexico. Australia is already falling short of funding commitments made in Copenhagen to help developing countries adapt to climate change and achieve low-carbon development..."

Commenting on the recent Pacific Island Forum, he said, "Our reputation among Pacific Island leaders is being eroded by Australia's ongoing reluctance to commit adequate funds to support climate change adaptation efforts in the region.

"As a wealthy, polluting country, we have a responsibility – and an interest – in doing our fair share to address these issues."

He called for Australia's aid efforts in East Timor to be directed to the high infant mortality rate – 93 babies per 1000 births – rather than on asylum-seeker processing.

His article ends with a plea to both major parties to build bridges to the international community. "We have nothing to fear from an ambitious, compassionate international agenda – to the contrary. It is essential to Australia's future prosperity."

[www.canberratimes.com.au](http://www.canberratimes.com.au)

## World's poorest need urgent action on climate change

As the latest round of the UN Climate Change Conference drew to a close in Bonn last week, international aid agency Oxfam warned that unless negotiations step up several gears, expectations would be low going into the next UN climate summit in Cancun.

**Oxfam's Policy Advisor Kelly Dent** said urgent action was still needed on climate change for the sake of the world's poorest people and ultimately the planet and the public expects such action.

"As *developed* nations continue to drag their feet on reaching a new fair and legally binding deal the already being measured in human lives," Ms Dent said.

One positive development of the talks was the progress within negotiations on managing finance needed to enable poor countries to adapt to climate changes and *develop* in a low carbon way.

Oxfam understands a decision has been made to ask the United Nations Framework Convention on Change (UNFCCC) to compile information on the delivery of immediate, additional finance that developed countries have committed to under the Copenhagen Accord, which would be made publicly available

Parties have also converged on the need for a new fund for longer-term finance to be established under UNFCCC and discussions are progressing on how it would be governed,

But Ms Dent said the fund risks marginalising the interests of women unless rules are agreed to ensure are adequately represented in deciding how the money should be spent. "Women produce up to 80 per cent of the food in poor countries and are the key to food security for poor people as climate change affects agriculture. The new global climate fund must ensure they get resources they need," Ms Dent said.

**Oxfam Australia Executive Director Andrew Hewett** said both the *Government* and Opposition were falling short on the critical issue of how they would meet Australia's commitment to provide fast-track climate finance under the Copenhagen Accord.

"Both have been silent during the election campaign on Australia's obligation to help poor countries adapt to climate change and just last week we saw Opposition plans to cut already insufficient climate finance initiatives," Mr Hewett said.

"The Government must also explain how it would meet its international obligation, as doing so would rebuild trust in the UN Climate Change Negotiations."

As one of the highest per capita polluters in the world, Australia's fair share of the \$433 billion fast start finance pledged by rich countries in Copenhagen is \$760 million.

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## C. HUMAN RIGHTS and the election

### Australia can do better to protect children's rights: Commission

President of the Australian Human Rights Commission Catherine Branson QC has reiterated her call for Australia to go further in protecting the fundamental human rights of children.

Delivering the annual 'Rights of the Child' lecture for Save the Children in Canberra, President Branson said that in the nearly 20 years since Australia had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, most children in Australia enjoyed the full range of human rights, but that significant groups of vulnerable children and young people still lacked adequate human rights protection.

“Australia can do a better job of protecting these children’s fundamental human rights,” Ms Branson said.

“Let us continue to strive for the world envisaged by Save the Children: a world in which every child has a healthy and safe childhood, the opportunity to learn and a voice to speak for themselves.”

In a thought-provoking speech, Ms Branson said that by ratifying the Convention Australia had promised to ensure the maximum survival and development of every child in Australia.

She said that despite most Australian children having universal access to free primary and secondary education, and most children in Australia having access to good primary health care, in too many areas Australia still had a long way to go to adequately protect the fundamental human right to survival and development.

“Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage, and thereby ensuring Indigenous children’s right to development, is one of Australia’s greatest and most pressing challenges,” Ms Branson said.

She said the government also had a pressing obligation to ensure the right to survival and development for children in Australia experiencing mental ill-health and those experiencing homelessness.

“Children with mental ill-health have reduced capacity to engage with schooling, to form and maintain positive relationships and have poorer long-term outcomes than those in good mental health,” she said.

She said it was also shameful that 12-18 year olds represented the largest group of people experiencing homelessness in Australia.

“Children have a particularly traumatic experience of homelessness. It disrupts schooling, family life, healthcare, nutrition, social networks and feelings of confidence and stability. An experience of homelessness as a child can also play into a cycle of intergenerational disadvantage,” she said.

Ms Branson said that establishing a national Children’s Commissioner would raise awareness of the importance of children’s rights and help to make consideration of children’s best interests a fundamental part of all government decision-making.

“Children are often voiceless in mainstream society and hold little power in our political processes,” she said.

“They are unable to vote, are less likely than adults to organise powerful lobby groups to advocate their opinions and influence decision-making, are rarely consulted in a meaningful way about decisions that will affect their lives and have less recourse to challenge decisions that adversely affect their interests.

“The relative powerlessness of children makes the protection of their rights all the more important.”

Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children in Australia, Suzanne Dvorak, said adults had a responsibility to speak out to assert the rights of children.

“But we also need to empower children to do this for themselves, by providing access to quality childhood development and education programs,” Ms Dvorak said.

“The *Rights of the Child* lecture has provided an important opportunity to focus attention on what’s already been achieved, and the crucial steps that are yet to be taken in establishing and protecting the rights of children in Australia.”

To read the speech go to [www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/speeches/speeches\\_president/2010/20100811\\_child\\_rights.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/speeches/speeches_president/2010/20100811_child_rights.html)

### **Funding corrects inequities, says schools’ group**

The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) welcomed on August 9 the announcement that the Government will increase funding to support students from remote Indigenous communities attending boarding schools.

This announcement means that schools with more than 50 students from remote indigenous communities will be eligible for a remote loading on the Indigenous Supplementary Assistance worth around \$2300 per annum for each student.

Executive Director of ISCA, Mr Bill Daniels, says that this change is an important measure supporting

schools that help address the educational, socio-emotional and health needs of Indigenous students.

"ISCA will continue to advocate that similar benefits should also be available to boarding schools irrespective of the number of Indigenous students from remote communities."

For more information access [www.isca.edu.au](http://www.isca.edu.au)

Or phone 02 6285 2926

## **1000 voices can't be ignored**

Chair of the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, Steve Larkins deplored the lack of a coherent, positive Aboriginal policy from any of the political pa said Mr Larkins but added that the Greens "have some encouraging ideas".

"1000 voices at our national conference in Alice Springs last week called for politicians to make a clear bipartisan commitment to:

- work in true partnership with Aboriginal peoples based respect and dignity;
- provide long term sustainable funding that will do the job;
- respect the work that Aboriginal services *have* been doing for years and will continue in the future.

"We appreciate that the current government has made an unprecedented commitment to improving outcomes for Aboriginal people with the National Apology to the Stolen Generations and the Nation Indigenous Reform Agreement," Mr Larkins said.

SNAICC calls on all parties to support the following priorities for the next term:

- a national resource to guide partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities and mainstream organisations and governments
- expand and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care Agencies
- proper implementation of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle
- rebuild and restore the 33 Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS)
- a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner.

SNAICC website at [www.snaicc.asn.au](http://www.snaicc.asn.au) Or phone 039489 809

## **Don't ratify extradition treaty with Emirates, says lobby group**

*Australians for Extradition Justice* has launched its first public campaign, calling on the Australian Government to not ratify the Extradition Treaty between Australia and the United Arab Emirates on the grounds that as a modern, progressive democracy, Australia should not have extradition treaties with countries that practice torture, or with countries which treat women as property.

There are concerns that if this treaty is ratified, the regulations tabled might result in trespasses on personal rights and liberties on Australian citizens. These concerns arise because of the lack of due process and lack of respect for human rights which have been demonstrated in many cases by authorities in the United Arab Emirates, the group says.

Expressing concern that a main source of all legislation is governed by Islamic Shari'a law, *Australians for Extradition Justice* say both the civil courts and the *Shari'a* courts share nonexclusive jurisdiction in respect of criminal proceedings

Most other Western countries either do not have a functioning treaty with the United Arab Emirates. Those that do, such as the United Kingdom, have special safeguards in their treaties with the United Arab Emirates to protect the rights of their citizens.

"In light of the current concerns, we believe that the Australian Government should either be considering similar safeguards, or ruling out ratification of this treaty completely." *Australians for Extradition Justice* say.

For more information, access:

Web: [www.AustraliansForExtraditionJustice.com](http://www.AustraliansForExtraditionJustice.com)

Email: [campaians@australiansforextraditioniustice.com](mailto:campaians@australiansforextraditioniustice.com)

Phone: 0404 575 883

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## **Young People's Human Rights Medal**

The Australian Human Rights Commission is encouraging young people who have made an outstanding contribution to advancing human rights in Australia, to nominate for the Young People's Human Rights Medal.

Commission President Catherine Branson QC said the Young People's Medal was open to those aged 25 years or under on 3 July this year, and was always hotly contested due to the great efforts being undertaken by young people to protect the human rights of others.

"Each year the Commission receives nominations from committed, innovative and passionate young people who take it upon themselves to lead the protection of human rights or raise awareness of human rights issues in their communities, colleges, workplaces and schools," Ms Branson said.

"The judging panel has a difficult task in assessing these nominations, but is always inspired by the efforts young people are making to build a fairer and better society for us all."

Winner of the 2009 Young People's Human Rights Medal, Vinay Menon, said winning the Medal was an honour and recognition of the valuable services provided by the Red Cross, the organisation for whom he volunteers.

"I have been lucky to be a part of the Red Cross and the services they provide that make a difference for vulnerable people," Mr Menon said.

"Winning the Young People's Medal was also an opportunity to highlight that young people do care about creating a fairer Australia and there are thousands of us volunteering everyday to achieve that goal."

Nominations can be made for the Human Rights Medal and Young People's Human Rights Medal and seven Award categories: Law, Community (Organisation), Community (Individual), Literature (non-fiction), Print Media, Television and Radio.

The Commission's website contains all the information about the 2010 Human Rights Medals and Awards, and information about the sponsors for this year's awards,

Nominations close at 5pm on Monday, 4 October, 2010. Winners will be presented with their Medals and Awards at a ceremony to be held on Human Rights Day, Friday, 10 December 2010 at the Sheraton on the Park Hotel in Sydney.

Nomination forms/information: [www.humanrights.gov.au/hr\\_awards](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards) or Ph: 02 9284 9618 or [hrawards@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:hrawards@humanrights.gov.au).

Tickets to awards: Ph: 02 9284 9618 or [hrawards@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:hrawards@humanrights.gov.au) (\$80 or \$50 concession includes two course luncheon and drinks.)

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## **D. PEACE & SECURITY**

### **UN Panel of Inquiry into flotilla deaths**

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has named members of the panel of Inquiry into the Israeli and Turkish flotilla incident of 31 May 2010 in which several Turkish activists and some Israeli defence personnel were killed.

Israel's panel member is Joseph Ciechanover. Turkey's panel member is Özdem Sanberk. Other panel members are the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Geoffrey Palmer, who is the chair of the panel; and the outgoing President of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe, who is vice-Chair.

Israel agreed to participate in the UN investigation into the May raid of a Gaza-bound aid flotilla. The UN investigation will complement domestic and internal investigations conducted by Turkey and Israel.

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## E. HEALTH & MEANS and the election

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has a range of information and services available to support voters with a disability to ensure their vote in the 2010 federal election on Saturday, 21 August.

An initiative at this election, telephone voting, is now available in 125 locations across Australia to allow voters who are blind or have low vision to cast a secret vote. This service is available both before and on election day in all AEC divisional offices and other selected locations listed at [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au). Voters using this service will have their name marked off the electoral roll and then cast their vote in private over the phone. To find out how this voting will work including opening hours, visit [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au) or call 13 23 26.

Essential election information, including the *'Your Official Guide to the 2010 Federal Election'* delivered to households across Australia, is also available in a range of accessible formats, including large print, e-text and audio at [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au), and in Braille and other formats by calling 132326.

Polling places with disabled access are shown at [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au), including identifying those that are fully accessible or accessible with assistance. Each polling place also has at least one wheelchair access table top voting screen.

## Pandemic eases

The world is no longer in phase 6 of influenza pandemic alert. WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan announced on August 10 that the H1N1 influenza virus (swine flu) had moved into the post-pandemic period. However, localised outbreaks of various magnitudes were likely to continue.

She said, "In the post-pandemic period, localised outbreaks of different magnitude may show significant levels of H1N1 transmission. This is the situation we are observing right now in **New Zealand**, and may see elsewhere.

In fact, the actions of health authorities in **New Zealand**, and also in **India**, in terms of vigilance, quick detection and treatment, and recommended vaccination, provide a model of how other countries may need to respond in the immediate post-pandemic period.

Based on available evidence and experience from past pandemics, it is likely that the virus will continue to cause serious disease in younger age groups, at least in the immediate post-pandemic period. Groups identified during the pandemic as at higher risk of severe or fatal illness will probably remain at heightened risk, though hopefully the number of such cases will diminish.

In addition, a small proportion of people infected during the pandemic, including young and healthy people, developed a severe form of primary viral pneumonia that is not typically seen during seasonal epidemics and is especially difficult and demanding to treat. It is not known whether this pattern will change during the post-pandemic period, further emphasizing the need for vigilance.

These are the views of members of the Emergency Committee, which was convened by teleconference.

Dr Chan said, "Pandemics, like the viruses that cause them, are unpredictable. So is the immediate post-pandemic period. There will be many questions, and we will have clear answers for only some. Continued vigilance is extremely important, and WHO has issued advice on recommended surveillance, vaccination, and clinical management during the post-pandemic period. ...This time around, we have been aided by pure good luck. The virus did not mutate during the pandemic to a more lethal form. Widespread resistance to oseltamivir did not develop. The vaccine proved to be a good match with circulating viruses and showed an excellent safety profile."

For more information, access: <http://www.who.int/en/>

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## F. MEDIA MATTERS

### Nominations open nationally for the UNAA Media Peace Awards 2010

The annual United Nations Association of Australia Media Peace Awards 2010 are seeking nominations in many categories.

Major categories include:

News (TV, Radio and Print), Current Affairs, Documentary, Online; Feature writing; Photojournalism. Each of these categories has its own nomination requirements although all need to stimulate public awareness and/or a change in public or private policy, leading to a broader understanding of relevant social justice or humanitarian issues.

Entries are sought also in **special categories** including:

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

- Promotion of Aboriginal Reconciliation

Victorian Multicultural Commission/Australian Multicultural Foundation

- Promotion of Multicultural Issues

Office of Senior Victorians

- Promotion of Positive Images of the Older Person

Office of Women's Policy

- Increasing Awareness and Understanding of Women's Rights and Issues

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

- Increasing Awareness and Understanding of Children's Rights and Issues

For more information including nomination requirements for each category visit:

[www.unaavictoria.org.au](http://www.unaavictoria.org.au) or contact Catherine Sutherland, Program Manager, United Nations Association of Australia (Victorian Division) Tel: 03 9670 7878

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## **G. OTHER NEWS**

### **Rudd on UN sustainability and poverty panel**

Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says he is looking forward to contributing to action on climate change as part of his appointment to a United Nations panel, the ABC reported on August 10.

UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon announced that Mr Rudd was appointed to a panel to work on global sustainability and reducing poverty.

Mr Rudd spoke briefly about his new role while campaigning in Brisbane. "This is a way in which I can make a modest contribution to the future of acting globally and nationally on climate change," he said.

Mr Ban says he has asked the panel to "think big". "The time for narrow agendas and narrow thinking is over," Mr Ban said.

In addition to Mr Rudd, the panel includes other politicians from around the world including the former prime ministers of Norway, South Korea, Japan and Mozambique. The panel has to produce a report by the end of next year.

Mr Rudd said the first meeting of the panel would be held in about a month and he would not be paid for the role.

"It is anticipated the panel will only meet once in 2010 and hold two meetings in 2011," the statement said. "This appointment is entirely consistent with Mr Rudd's work as a Member of Parliament should he be re-elected at the coming election."

### **Immigration and client satisfaction**

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) announced on August 10 the results of the first phase of an extensive 12-month research program into client satisfaction and the department's performance.

The results of this research come as the department begins a transformation exercise to provide more efficient and effective service to all its clients in an effort to become the best immigration and citizenship organisation in the world.

Among the most significant findings were that 84 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their most recently used service delivery channel (phone, email, online or in-person) and 94 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the department's online application process for visas.

The research, conducted by ORIMA Research Pty Ltd, involved responses from nearly 7500 visa applicants, citizenship applicants, clients with immigration status issues, registered migration agents and sponsors, across 50 nationalities.

Other significant research findings included:

- 89 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the DIAC website
- 87 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the in-person service they most recently received

- 95 per cent of respondents who had used the online application system said they would use it again
- 89 per cent of citizenship applicants were satisfied in their dealings with DIAC.

The department recognises that the global movement of people will be one of the great challenges of the 21st century.

"We need to position ourselves as an organisation to compete in global markets and to attract the best migrants and key skills required for Australia's future growth and prosperity," a DIAC spokesman said.

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## H. ENVIRONMENT and the election

### Polling shows public support for marine protection

More than 80 per cent of Queenslanders polled say protecting Australia's oceans is important enough to influence their vote at the federal election.

Relying new research WWF's Conservation Manager Dr Gilly Llewellyn, said this week, "These results show loud and clear that Queenslanders want to protect our wonderful oceans so both they and their children can continue to enjoy them into the future."

The results are part of nation-wide research conducted by Auspoll for ACF and WWF. The two conservation groups are calling on the next Australian government to create a network of marine sanctuaries by 2012. Such a network would protect the most biodiverse and fragile places in Australia's oceans.

Waters off Queensland contain important habitats for threatened species such as whales, turtles and dugongs, as well as areas of rich marine biodiversity such as the Coral Sea. "The best way to protect our marine life is to create safe havens free from oil exploration and production, and commercial and recreational fishing," said ACF's Healthy Oceans Campaigner Chris Smyth.

Mr Smyth said even though Queensland's Great Barrier Reef, a World Heritage site, is protected by a network of marine sanctuaries, Australia's overall level of marine protection remains at less than five per cent.

### 30 BIG SOLAR PROJECTS BY 2020 FEASIBLE

Australia could cut its carbon pollution by 240 million tonnes if it produced five per cent of its electricity needs from large scale 'Big Solar' projects by 2020, according to the Australian Solar Energy Society and the Australian Conservation Foundation. Both groups are calling for five per cent of Australia's electricity to come from Big Solar by 2020.

"A five per cent target would establish at least 30 large-scale solar power plants, generate 11,250 gigawatt hours of solar by 2020, and cut Australia's carbon pollution by 240 million tonnes" said John Grimes, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Solar Energy Society.

For more information, contact [ceo@auses.org.au](mailto:ceo@auses.org.au) or phone 02 9006 1614

## ARTICLES IN FOCUS

*Earlier this year Megan Davis created history by becoming the first Australian Indigenous woman elected to a United Nations body. This is an extract from **James Giggacher** article in the ANU Reporter. Read the full article published in the Spring 2010 edition of the ANU Reporter at*

<http://news.anu.edu.au/?cat=23&ey=2010&em=Spring>



Megan Davis wants to use her time on the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to address the issue of Indigenous women, gender and violence. Photo: Darren Boyd, from the *ANU Reporter* Spring 2010 edition.

### **Megan's road to the United Nations**

Megan Davis didn't grow up in an activist Aboriginal family.

"When my non-Indigenous mother and Aboriginal father separated, mum did the best she could to foster a scholarly environment in our housing commission house," Davis says.

"Politics was her core passion and even though we weren't very wealthy growing up, we always had a subscription to Time magazine. I think I have read every single issue since 1981."

In this way she became aware of the United Nations and the role it plays in fostering world peace. She says this realisation set her on her path towards human rights law.

Now a Visiting Fellow at the National Centre for Indigenous Studies, Davis says she was so enthralled by constitutional law issues that she has gone on to forge a remarkable career as an international human rights lawyer. She recently submitted her PhD, which investigates the relationship between Indigenous women and liberal democracy. She undertook her doctorate at the Regulatory Institutions Network at ANU, supervised by Dr Hilary Charlesworth, while also directing the Indigenous Law Centre at the University of New South Wales.

Prior to this, Davis completed an internship as the first UN Indigenous Fellow at the Geneva-based Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. There she began to help draft the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a process she continued to participate in until the final draft was completed in 2005.

Given this record of hard work and achievement, it is perhaps no surprise then that Davis has recently created history, being named the first Australian Indigenous woman elected to a UN body. In April this year she was selected by the 54 countries of the UN Economic and Social Council to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, a body that advises the UN on indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

Her appointment to the forum is also the first time that an Australian Aboriginal person has been nominated for a UN role by the Australian Government. Davis says she is looking forward to advocating for indigenous peoples' rights in international law.

Read the full article by **James Giggacher** published in the Spring 2010 edition of the ANU Reporter at <http://news.anu.edu.au/?cat=23&ey=2010&em=Spring>

### **UNAA news**

**UNAA's NATIONAL CONFERENCE**, was held today, **August 13**, at NSW Parliament Theatre, Sydney, with a series of presentations on issues of direct relevance to the UN in 2010.

The International Peace Award was made to Dr Stella Cornelius AO OBE for a lifetime of devotion to peace, to conflict resolution and to social justice issues. In particular, for initiating the Peace and Conflict Resolution Program of the UNAA 1973; the Conflict Resolution Network; the Media Peace Awards 1979; the Ministry for Peace Campaign 1983; and the Bilateral Peace Treaties Proposal.

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