

Senator the Hon. Ursula Stephens

Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector  
Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Inclusion

Re-launch of the Pelican Foundation  
Canberra 30 September 2008

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Acknowledgements:

- Bishop Allan Ewing, Vicar General of the Anglican Archdiocese
- Karin McDonald MLA
- Brendan Smyth MLA
- Ngunnawal people as traditional owners

Kevin Rudd said not long ago that the idea of two Australias, one for the haves and one for the have nots, is not acceptable. Exclusion has social and economic impacts that we as a government are determined will be addressed. However, it will require a significant change in the way that we deliver policy and services to our communities. It will also require us to engage in respectful partnerships with organisations such as the Pelican Foundation, Anglicare and other faith-based service providers to ensure that we are all focused on those who most need our care and support.

When we think and talk about our own lives, we very often take for granted the extent to which we are able to make choices. We can decide if we want to go to the gym, the shops, the pictures, or to meet friends for a barbeque. We can make plans for next weekend, we can take a holiday, we can decide at the last minute to sleep in, take a flexi day, or do something totally different. For too many people in Australia, these choices are not part of their world or their life.

For these people the choices can be as stark as 'do I stay here with my children and risk another violent attack, or do I take them and sleep on the

streets?'; 'Do I spend my last five dollars on something to eat, or the drink or fix that will help me get through the gnawing pain of hunger, homelessness, loneliness and despair?'. How can this possibly be happening in Australia today, with 17 years of strong economic growth, that we have growing numbers of homelessness, jobless households, increasing mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, youth suicide and violence?

This is what the social inclusion agenda is all about. It's a very ambitious agenda in which every one of us has a part to play. We have to identify the systems, attitudes, programs and processes that prevent everyone from having a fair go in our society. We have to understand why people aren't able to engage in work and education, or make connections with family, friends and their local community. We intend to build bridges within our society - between those who have plenty and those who have little, between governments and communities, between organisations who act as the glue within our society; our ambition is that by 2020, no-one in this country will believe that its someone else job to make a difference, not theirs.

And this is where the Pelican Foundation will come into its own. The Foundation has been working quietly and consistently for near 25 years to support the pastoral work of the Anglican Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn.

I am very pleased that the Diocese has undertaken a strategic review of the work of the foundation, and has decided to relaunch it with ' fresh energy and focus' in reshaping its approach to community engagement. This modernisation of the Pelican foundation is consistent with other foundations in Australia who have undertaken a similar journey - because all our organisations - whether they be government, community, or church, need to be able to be flexible, to be nimble partners and at the same time to be able to pursue their own mission in a very focused way.

The Pelican Foundation's re-focus is about supporting projects that worked in and with communities to promote real change. The projects that you will hear about tonight do exactly that - engaging on their own terms with those who are challenged, marginalised or seeking to find their way.

I commend the work that you are all doing to support the Foundation. It is so important to have an endowment fund that underpins good work - so that it can be an enduring legacy, not just for the church, but for the communities with whom you are working.

I wish you every success. The religious imagery of the pelican reminds us that, just as the pelican draw its own blood to feed her young, and just as the Lord shed his blood for us, we can all draw on our own resources to give so much more to those in need.

I am delighted to relaunch the Pelican Foundation and wish you every success in your ministry.