

Media Release

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A vibrant Anglican network helping build a just society

Anglicare Australia Chair, Dr Ray Cleary, addressed the national Anglicare Council at the Annual General Meeting in Darwin on Sunday 2 September and urged member agencies to remain vibrant, prophetic, vigilant and engaging at a local, state and national level.

"We live in challenging times," said Dr Cleary. "As a nation we have more wealth than at any time in our history yet, as the *Australia Fair* report issued by ACOSS says, one in 10 Australians are not the beneficiaries of this new wealth."

While economic indicators help illustrate the divide between rich and poor Australians, Dr Cleary warned we must be careful not to rely solely on this data to measure disadvantage.

"Poverty and disadvantage cannot only be defined in economic terms nor, as some suggest, solved by the free market," he said.

"The voices of children deprived of food, shelter, access to health and education opportunities which stifle their growth and development are hidden by the macro economic indicators.

"Denying children and families access to education and a nurturing family environment is a denial of their basic human rights and is therefore a moral and ethical issue as well as an economic one."

The AGM formed part of the tenth annual Anglicare Australia conference being held at the Crowne Plaza in Darwin from 2 to 4 September 2007.

The conference, titled *Cultural Richness: informing the future*, gave delegates from around 30 Anglican welfare agencies an opportunity to examine their work and approaches to inclusiveness and diversity and discuss how that work is being shaped by policy and practice.

Dr Cleary concluded his address with the plea for member agencies to, "remain faithful to our calling and supportive of one another in all our endeavours to build a more just society."

Combined, Anglicare Australia agencies employ around 30,000 staff and volunteers and serve almost 500,000 people in every state and territory of Australia.

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