

what's important?

It's not important how much or how little you are able to do. It is important that you are passionate about the work you undertake, and that your social justice group is run honestly, equitably and as realistically as possible. It's also important that your goals are achievable, and that you take time to reflect on what you are doing and why.



photo courtesy of Justice and International Mission

about us

UnitingJustice Australia is the National Assembly's voice on issues of social and environmental justice. We work in collaboration with other Assembly agencies and synod justice units around the country as well as with other community and faith-based organisations and groups. Visit our website to view and download issues-based fact sheets, worship resources, media releases, position papers and submissions to Government. We also produce action ideas for people who are interested in advocating for peace and justice.

access all our resources and subscribe to our email news updates at our website:
<http://nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice>

email us: unitingjustice@nat.uca.org.au

phone us: (02) 8267 4236

send us a fax: (02) 8267 4222



"... and what does the Lord require of you but to do **justice**, and to love **kindness**, and to walk **humbly** with your God?"

Micah 6:8

you can find help

Uniting Church social justice contacts in your synod can help:

News South Wales

UnitingCare NSW.ACT

www.unitingcarenswact.org.au

(02) 8267 4372

Victoria and Tasmania

Justice and International Mission Unit

<http://vic.uca.org.au/jim>

(03) 9251 5266

Western Australia

Social Justice and Uniting International Mission

<http://justice.wa.uca.org.au>

(08) 9486 1599

Queensland

Social Responsibility and International Mission

<http://www.socialissues.ucaqld.com.au>

(07) 3377 9805

South Australia

Justice and Solidarity Project

<http://www.missionresourcing.net.au>

(08) 8202 5126

Northern Synod

<http://ns.uca.org.au>

(08) 8982 3400



Starting a Social Justice Group

...for a world reconciled



why start a social justice group?

We live in a world where millions of people live and die in extreme poverty; conflict and bloodshed scar the lives of so many; and the degradation of our natural world is escalating. Our world is confronting and often violent, and it can seem easier to retreat into the shelter of our own lives.

However God calls us not to shelter ourselves from the world, but to embrace its sorrows and work to end its suffering. Jesus called people to see each other, hear each other and touch each other. He challenged the systems and structures that disconnected people from each other and taught about God's will for a world where the oppressed would be free, the hungry fed and the sick made whole.

From its inception, the Uniting Church in Australia has been committed to social and environmental justice and has a proud history of working to overcome violence, poverty and the abuse of human rights at local, national and international levels.

Our faith calls on us to imagine a world where people live together as neighbours in peace. Uniting Church people work together for justice and peace within the Church and the wider community. One excellent way that individual members of the Uniting Church can become involved in social justice work is to join or form a social justice group in their local area.

A good way to begin is to organise your group's activities in support of an existing campaign. Campaigns you might be interested in include:

make indigenous poverty history campaign seeks to ensure that the commitments made to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) do not overlook the poverty suffered by Indigenous Peoples around the world including Australia
<http://www.ncca.org.au/natsieac>

micah challenge is a global Christian campaign working to be a prophetic and powerful voice for justice, for and with the poor in communities around the world
www.micahchallenge.org.au



photo courtesy of Justice and International Mission

starting a social justice group: a guide

find like minded people Seek out others in your congregation and community who share your passion for justice. Gain the support of the Church Council to call a meeting of interested people. Publicise your meeting by placing notices on church and community noticeboards and in church newsletters. You could try working ecumenically - contact other churches in your area to see if they might be interested.

get organised Once you have found your group, make sure it works smoothly! At the first meeting:

- find out who people are, what they care about, and why they have come
- explore what commitment people are willing to make, and how frequently the group will be able to meet
- elect a chair and a secretary to facilitate the meeting and organise contacts, minutes and a mail or email list.

get informed Some of the best places for information and support are church agencies and non-government organisations where you can access a wide variety of information and action resources and position papers on different issues. Many of these groups can also help you keep up to date about the latest issues through email bulletins and newsletters.

get focused Work out what you need to do to make your group's contribution effective. Are you interested in:

- one particular issue, or do you have the resources and interest to work on more than one activity and/or issue at once?
- organising an event?
- running a letter-writing or lobbying campaign around an issue?
- undertaking volunteer work?
- engaging in a particular debate within the Church or the community?
- supporting an existing campaign such as Micah Challenge or Make Indigenous Poverty History?
- working for change at a local, state, national or international level?

get active Put your plan into action! Try something small first to get a feel for how the group works best.

take time to reflect on your activities. What works, and what doesn't? Have you tried to do too much, or is there room to do more? How can you better utilise your resources?

have faith With a shared purpose and perspective, your actions can make a real difference!