



THE MELBOURNE CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR  
JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

presents

**2025:**  
**Work, Ethics**  
**and Values**  
Labouring ideals  
in the 21st Century

**Thursday, 8 September 2005**

**1.45 – 4.45pm**

Yarra Room, Melbourne Town Hall,  
90-120 Swanston Street, Melbourne

Keith Abbott is a senior lecturer in industrial relations at Deakin University. He has research publications in the areas of pressure group politics, critical realist philosophy, European industrial relations and international trade unionism. He has worked in construction, mining and manufacturing in Australia, Britain, PNG and Sweden. He has been a trade union researcher and Political Studies Fellow in the Australian Federal Parliament.

David Birch has been Professor of Communication and the Director of the Corporate Citizenship Research Unit, Deakin University, Melbourne, since 1997. He is currently on the Editorial Boards of several International Journals, including *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship*; *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*; *International Journal of Business Governance and Ethics*, and *The Journal of Social Responsibility*. Professor Birch is (or has been) involved in research partnerships with leading organisations in Australia, including, ANZ, BP, Rio Tinto, The City of Melbourne, World Vision, BHP Billiton, Ernst & Young, Philanthropy Australia, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Business Council of Australia. He is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability (UK). Pro Bono work includes The Lighthouse Foundation; The Chain Reaction Foundation and the Ability Australia Foundation.

## **Dr Keith Abbott** **Catholic social thought and labouring ideals in the 21st Century**

Labouring ideals in the 21st century can draw fruitfully on the recommendations and broad themes propagated by a century of Catholic social teachings. To this end the paper begins by briefly reviewing the key principles of this school of thought as they pertain to the rights of employees, the duties of employers and the obligations of the state. It is argued that these principles encapsulate many enduring features that provide the foundations for the conduct of ethical relations and the exercise of moral values in the workplace. Moreover, that the need to propagate and apply these principles is becoming more pronounced under the growing ascendancy of neo-liberal policy solutions. And finally, that in view of this growing ascendancy there is an increasing need for Catholic advocates to remind legislators and parishioners of the rights, duties and responsibilities capital and labour must apply towards one another if a 'good society' for all is to be realised.

## **Professor David Birch** **Reading the social future of business and corporate social responsibility**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been gaining considerable momentum as a non-negotiable aspect of doing business in a global new economy, both overseas and in Australia, in recent years. Increasingly, while there is an ever-growing plethora of external guidelines, protocols, frameworks, regulatory requirements and reporting indices guiding the mechanics of CSR, a newer, less tangible, discourse has been gaining ground, framing the social and cultural responsibility of business in a more 'spiritual' vocabulary. The 'soul' of business and the workplace; corporate 'stewardship'; the 'spirit' of capitalism and business as a 'calling', are terms now being introduced. This paper projects 20 years into the future to examine where this current 'spiritualising' trend of the role of business in the community may lead to, reading that role through the lens of the long history of social doctrine in the Roman Catholic Church and the writings of leading thinkers in this area like Michael Novak, with an overall aim of reassessing the current theoretical and conceptual basis of the current pragmatically oriented CSR towards a new understanding of the morality of business and its social future.

Bruce Bonyhady is a Non-Executive Director and consultant in financial services, specialising in funds management. Current directorships include: Chairman of ANZ Executors and Trustee Company Limited, which manages about 400 charitable foundations, including the Felton Bequest, of which Mr Bonyhady is a Member; Chairman of the Yooralla Society of Victoria; and, Chairman of the Centre for Development Disability Research at the Royal Children's Hospital. Previous roles include Chairman and Managing Director of ANZ Managed Investments Limited and ANZ Life Assurance Company Limited; Executive Vice President at BT Funds Management; Managing Director of National Mutual Funds Management Europe; a Director of Syntec Economic Services; and, various economic policy positions in the Commonwealth Treasury.

Lindsay Dawson is a retired product development executive from the Ford Motor Company currently completing research for his PhD into the connection between philosophy, business and ethics. During his time with Ford, Lindsay experienced a variety of management/functional responsibilities; the last 5 years of which he was Director of Large Car Programs responsible for the development and launch of Falcon carline derivatives. Since retiring 5 years ago he has completed a BA (Hons) and does sessional tutoring in philosophy at Deakin University and is a founding member of their Philosophical Society. Lindsay is also a research member of their Corporate Citizen Research Unit.

## **Bruce Bonyhady** **Adding to our social infrastructure and community**

As we move towards 2025, the pace of economic and social change is likely to accelerate. Market forces will fuel economic growth, but what will direct social change? A number of trends seem clear. The role of governments will be redefined. Philanthropy will become a much more significant source of capital, to fund ventures that build social infrastructure. Companies will embrace their social responsibility and the imperative of adding value to the community, as well as their customers, staff and shareholders. However, the balance between social and economic well-being will ultimately reflect our choices and values. The challenge will be to achieve increased wealth and greater social justice and an enhanced sense of community.

## **Lindsay Dawson** **The influence of future trends on business ethics**

This paper examines the potential influence of future trends in Western societies on business ethics. The political drive for economic efficiency can adversely influence the environment of cultural social values within which business functions. I claim that recent calls for more ethical business practice will likely lead to an instrumental approach to business ethics at the expense of a normative approach. The latter approach is essential for the enhancement of business stakeholder relationships directly influencing excellent business functioning. Excellent functioning businesses acknowledge that there is a desirable synergy between stakeholder aspirations mediated by robust business cultural values that can simultaneously facilitate business strategic imperatives and ethical outcomes. Another major influence of political economic efficiency is the way it is transforming the traditional Protestant work ethic of duty to a new work ethic for Western workers seeking to take charge of their lives. The paper outlines various business and social trends that are putting renewed emphasis on the importance of business cultural values. These values can potentially engage the loyalty of workers driven by an intrinsic valuation of their work-life in excellent functioning businesses to produce quality products and ethical outcomes.

Roy Hay was educated at Glasgow University and Balliol College, Oxford and taught at the Universities of East Anglia, Glasgow and the Open University, before coming to Deakin University in Australia in 1977. In 2002 he set up Sports and Editorial Services Australia with three colleagues. He is the author of *The Origins of the Liberal Welfare Reforms, 1906-1914*, originally published in 1975 and still in print, and several other books. He is currently writing a history of St Joseph's College, Geelong and of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce.

Peter Kelly is Head of Behavioural Studies in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University, Australia. His research is currently focused on the professionalisation of workplace identities. These identities take many forms – but have in common an encouragement to develop certain capacities in a workplace/organisational environment. These capacities then entitle a person to be identified, by themselves and others, as 'professional'. These processes of professionalisation also generate certain obligations that accompany a positive identification as a professional.

## **Roy Hay** **Is there anything to be learned from history?**

Is there anything to be learned from history when we contemplate work, ethics and values in the 21st century? On several occasions in the past, societies have had wide ranging and illuminating debates on the nature of the appropriate political response to fundamental economic and social changes. Three of these were the classic period of the industrial revolution in the late 18th and early 19th century, the late 19th and early 20th centuries when socialism and progressive liberalism drove the agenda and the years following the Second World War when a combination of Keynesianism and internationalism was ascendant. Some might want to add the 1970s and 1980s when economic rationalism took hold of the policy debate. This paper addresses each of these phases trying to distil the elements that bear on the issues we should be wrestling with today with a view to creating a fair and just society. It does not claim that definitive answers are to be found in the past, or our interpretations of the past, but it does suggest that those who forget the past may be condemned to relive it.

## **Dr Peter Kelly** **In a world gone slightly mad... who are we to become?**

This paper offers some thoughts on the challenges, the choices and the opportunities that present themselves to individuals in the contemporary liberal democracies as we attempt to construct what is, increasingly, a Do It Yourself (DIY) biography. More particularly I want to sketch an outline of what might be called a new ethics of the Self – a series of injunctions, obligations, suggestions that require us to practise our freedom in certain, quite specific ways, in the brave new world of 24/7 global capitalism. We can call this form of personhood the Entrepreneurial Self. What does it mean to be Entrepreneurial? I want to suggest that by examining the social and economic and political stories that construct the unemployed as being responsible for their own fate we can reveal the truths about whom we should, as adults, become. The problems associated with unemployment are being re-thought in ways that move beyond a liberal welfare model of the world that imagined the possibility of collective forms of insurance against the range of risks associated with industrial modernity – including the possibilities of unemployment. Increasingly, solutions to problems such as unemployment are imagined as residing in the capacity of various authorities to develop in individuals a particular ethics of the Self. A form of personhood that positions individuals as being responsible for conducting themselves, in the business of life, as an enterprise, a project, a work in progress.

**James Macken has worked as a union official in the aircraft, waterfront and clerical industries (1946-1963). Admitted to the NSW Bar in 1963 and remains a member of the Bar. Appointed Judge of the Industrial Commission of NSW in 1975 and retired from the bench in 1989. He was Arbitrator of the Public Hospitals Act (1976-1989) and Member of the Transport Industry Tribunal (1998-2004). Academic experiences include Lecturer in Labour Relations Law, Sydney University (1965-2005), Honorary Associate Department Industrial Relations, Sydney University (1989-2003), and awarded Honorary Doctor of Laws, Sydney University (Honoris Causa) 1992. Received Order of Australia, AM. June 2003.**

## **The Honourable Dr. James Macken** **Developing an authentic philosophy of work**

Work has a value in the development of individual workers. To develop an authentic philosophy of work the primacy of the worker and the individual work ethic should be the paramount consideration. To create a commercial and industrial society which is consonant with the dignity of men and women the focus ought always be the best interests of the workers. This focus ought to embrace all workers including disabled workers, married women, young people and retirees. It should be the aim of governments and employers to achieve efficient and productive operations while maintaining the primacy of the workforce itself. While the prevailing philosophy of business and government has as the focus the needs of the corporation or the economy it is inevitable that there will develop a servile workforce and servile society. The reduction in the standing of worker collectives and the powers of independent tribunals is an inevitable consequence of the philosophy. Further, the regulation of the employment contract with the obligation that such contracts should include social standards, such as limited hours, annual leave, overtime and the like will diminish or stop altogether.

Dr Helen Szoke was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria (EOCV) in December 2004. Previously Dr Szoke was the Chief Executive Officer of the Infertility Treatment Authority, leading the establishment of the Authority's regulatory powers. Dr Szoke has extensive experience in the health sector, particularly as a champion for consumers rights and as a proponent of organisational change in health institutions. She is Chair of Women's Health Victoria, a member of the National Health and Medical Research Council Licensing Committee and holds a Graduate Diploma in Public Policy and a PhD in Public Policy, both from the University of Melbourne. Dr Szoke is committed to positioning the EOCV as the visible leader in the promotion and protection of human rights and wants to inspire all Victorians to assert their human rights and embrace diversity. Dr Szoke's key priorities over the next three years will be: increasing regional access to EOCV services particularly for disadvantaged Victorians; lifting the profile of human rights as the Government embarks on a consultation about a Charter of Human Rights; and, identifying and addressing systemic discrimination.

## **Dr Helen Szoke** **Fostering a human rights culture and confidence for workplaces:** **Victorian initiatives that meet this challenge**

If current proposals in Victoria for a Charter of Human Rights and related reforms, including a revitalised Equal Opportunity Act, are realised, workplaces in Victoria have a remarkable opportunity and the tools to demonstrate bona fides in protecting and promoting employees' human rights into the 21st century. To date the schism between human rights and workplace experience and culture – evidenced by continuing high levels of workplace discrimination, pay inequity and workplace harassment and bullying – has persisted. In response to this the proposals for human rights reform outlined in the Victorian Government's Justice Statement and Social Justice policy provide a profound opportunity to inculcate a human rights culture across workplaces and the community. Indeed, this is essential if respect for human rights is to gain traction in other spheres of public life in the future. This paper will explore the direction of the human rights reform in Victoria and possible 'flow-on' effects for Victorian workplaces.

Dr. Carla Lipsig-Mummé is the Research Professor of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University, and Director of W.A.G.E., the research centre on Work and Society in the Global Era. Carla is currently Vice-President of the International Sociology Association's Research Committee on Comparative Labour. She came to Australia in 2001, from York University in Canada, where she was Founding director of the Centre for Research on Work and Society which led a number of Canada's largest research projects devoted to social justice, including multi-national projects such as 'Bridging the Solitudes', which explored ways to link access to higher education to access decent employment for young people from traditionally marginalised groups. Carla was previously a union organiser for the United Farmworkers in the US, and also organised garment workers in California and below the border in Mexico. More recently she has combined her academic career with labour education work for trade unions in Canada, Russia and Australia. Carla's recent publications are on precarious employment, the prematurely elderly and the imploding labour market, regulating the professions, young workers and the future of work. In 1990 she was elected to Canadian Who's Who.

Australia's public policy has arrived at a particularly important juncture. The Federal Government's 2005 industrial reform package presents as a radical shift away from the foundations upon which Australian workplaces have been organised since Federation. The legacies of the Government's proposed workplace amendments will be long enduring. While the need to develop mitigated responses to the challenges of the present is always pressing, the purpose of **2025: Work, Ethics and Values** is to give consideration to distant horizons. This high level forum provides keen social thinkers with an opportunity to put forward their view of an ideal labour template for future generations. Granted creative licence and encouraged to posit ideas that are possible rather than those that are simply probable, a diverse group of social theorists will address topics such as *corporate governance, business ethics, subsidiarity, philanthropy and inalienable human rights.*



The **Melbourne Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace** aims to help educate and give leadership to the Catholic and wider community in the gospel message of justice and in the social teachings of the church. The Commission's Charter requires it to work for justice in public, local and national structures. The Commission actively seeks to explore ways that social justice can be improved in society and in the performance of mechanisms that have a role in public life.

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