

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Australian Christians to Unite in Prayer for Justice

On Monday 12 October hundreds of Australian Christians from across the country and all parts of the Church will raise their voices in prayer for our nation's leaders and Australia's contribution to a world free from extreme poverty.

As part of Micah Challenge's annual Voices for Justice event (10-13 October), hundreds of participants will join Federal politicians and many others from churches in and around Canberra in a public night time prayer vigil on the lawns of Parliament House.

They will also be joined by over 40 local churches and Christian groups across Australia who will host simultaneous prayer vigils and raise their voices in prayer for the Church, Australia's elected representatives and our world.

"If we define advocacy as speaking to the powerful on behalf of the powerless, then prayer itself is a form of advocacy as we cry out from the depths of our hearts to the God of grace and justice," said Ben Thurley, National Coordinator of Micah Challenge.

"We are called to pray for all our leaders and for their work in governing the nation. We are also called to pray for our own nation and the way it helps or hinders God's work of peace, mercy, and justice in the wider community of nations," said Mr Thurley.

"Having Christians around the country praying in this way sends a powerful message to politicians and reminds them that we hold politicians to their highest calling which is to work for the common good and to protect the rights of the poor and needy both within our borders and beyond them."

This year's worship and lobbying event also marks the beginning of a new era of campaigning as Micah Challenge relaunches as *'Micah'* – a renewed advocacy coalition of church and Christian organisations raising a powerful voice for global justice and world free from poverty.

Micah will be the successor to Micah Challenge, which formed 10 years ago, and focused on ensuring that Australia does its fair share to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) by 2015.

According to Mr Thurley, the global picture relating to poverty and sustainable human development has changed dramatically over the past decade and it has never been a more important time for Christians to be intentional and strategic in prayer and action for justice.

"Over the past year we have seen the largest ever cuts to the Federal aid budget, and over this past weekend a new set of global goals – the Sustainable Development Goals - which aim to end extreme poverty, tackle inequality and combat climate change by 2030 have just been agreed upon by world leaders," said Mr Thurley.

Voices for Justice campaigners will join prayer with action this October by meeting with over 100 federal politicians in Canberra to urge them to elevate Australia's contribution to a world free from poverty.

For more about the Canberra vigil and hosting your own Voices for Justice prayer vigil go to www.micahchallenge.org.au/vigils to register and download the resources.

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Available for Interviews:

- Ben Thurley, Micah Challenge's National Coordinator
- Voices for Justice participants from all states and most Christian denominations
- Prayer Vigil coordinators from churches across Australia

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Micah Challenge Australia (soon to be relaunched as Micah Australia) is a coalition of churches and Christian organisations raising a powerful voice for justice and a world free from poverty. See www.micahchallenge.org.au.