

Exclusive Release

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CHRISTIAN WOMEN LEADERS UNITED IN HISTORIC VISIT TO CANBERRA
ADVOCATING FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS

Women leaders from across the denominations of Australia's churches and Christian organisations have come together for an historic visit to Canberra today. In addition to advocating for policies of justice and care for the world's poor, the cohort, facilitated by Micah Australia, will meet with Senior Ministers and Members of Parliament from both political parties, including some women MPs, to thank them for their public service and to encourage them to lead Australia in continuing its commitment to creating a just world.

The delegation includes representatives from Hillsong Church, Baptist Church, Citipointe Church, The Grainery, Anglican Deaconess Ministries and The Salvation Army.

"Every week, Christians across the country pray for our elected leaders to exercise moral leadership: to make the hard, but right decisions on our behalf," said Dr Kate Harrison Brennan, CEO of Anglican Deaconess Ministries.

"Our visit to Canberra is a reminder that the Christian faith prioritises the poor and vulnerable, and seeks this type of moral action. Australians know how to be good neighbours, across backyard fences; we want our leaders in Canberra to do this on our behalf, across borders."

As part of the trip, the Christian women leaders' delegation will meet key Ministers and Shadow Ministers at Parliament House. They are also hoping to put forward the case for continued support for the overseas aid budget and supporting some of the poorest and most vulnerable families around the world. With only 60 days to go until Universal Children's Day, the leaders will also be advocating for the release of children and their families from Nauru, joining over 100,000 who are calling for Kids Off Nauru.

"This feels like a significant moment," said 2016 Olympic finalist Eloise Wellings, who will accompany the group. "Too often, the church is known for its internal disagreements that become public, but to have women leaders joining together from across the denominational spectrum shows a significant act of unity and one that we hope will be an encouragement to the government and opposition."

Tim Costello, Executive Director of Micah Australia, who will lead Micah's annual conference, Voices for Justice, again this year from 1-4 December in Canberra, also sees this as a unique moment both to address cultural divisions and to unite women leaders who are influencing the country as Christians of influence.

"This visit brings representatives across the church together to advocate for some of the most vulnerable citizens in the world by sharing our vision for a more generous and fair Australia," Costello said.

"Social justice is at the heart of our mission, and we believe at the core of who we are as Australians. We also want to take this opportunity to thank these politicians for all their hard work and their ongoing efforts to serve their local communities."

Christian women leaders making the trip include:

- Donna Crouch, Hillsong Community Engagement Pastor
- Eloise Wellings, Olympic Games runner and Founder of Love Mercy NGO
- Colonel Julie Campbell, National Advocate for Gender Equity, The Salvation Army
- Leigh Ramsey, Senior Pastor Citipointe Church and Founder of ITS NOT OK Projects and She Rescue Home Cambodia
- Catherine Thambiratnam, Hillsong Church Aid and Development
- Sue Irwin, Senior Pastor, The Grainery Church
- Vikki Howorth, Social Justice Pastor, Seaforth Baptist Church
- Kate Harrison Brennan, CEO, Anglican Deaconess Ministries

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Micah Australia is a coalition of Australia's largest Christian non-government organisations raising a powerful voice for justice and a world free from poverty.

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