



Catholic Women's League Australia Inc.

WALKING WITH GOD 'WE WALK BY FAITH NOT BY SIGHT' CORINTHIANS 2-5:7

National Newsletter

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March 2009

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invitation



THE RESURRECTION



Easter Blessings

Image courtesy Sister Genny Ryan, OSU



Roundtable meeting Tuesday 24 February in Canberra. Proposed Model 1 could initially auspice some new alliances and for them to become fully operational within the three year funding period 2009-2012. Model 2, funding two additional Alliances, namely, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Organisations. Model 3, to retain the current number of Alliances with a revised focus on cohesive and cooperative guidelines. The AWC is committed to being an effective and energetic advocate for women in its role as one of the Alliances now and in the future.

The National Executive thanks and congratulates National Social Issues Convenor, Betty Roberts on her excellent Submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission Discussion Paper, "Freedom of Religious Belief in the 21st Century in Australia", January 2009. January is a time of year when MO's are taking a well earned rest, but it also appears to be when Government sends out requests for submissions, so time is always of the essence. We do appreciate the time and energy that Betty has put into this submission. Look out

for it on the website.

The National Executive also took the opportunity to remind Minister Stephen Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs that "Catholic Women's League Australia implores that the current AusAID guidelines not be changed".

To journey with Christ means we are asked to put aside our pride, status and possessions, and this is what has happened over the last couple of weeks as the communities of Australia have shared their wealth with compassion and enthusiasm to those who have been left with so little. True mateship. We give thanks to God for the wonderful generosity and for the caring of our neighbours during this tragic time.

I ask God's blessings on you all as we continue to be the hands and feet of Christ in our everyday lives.

In Charity Work & Loyalty

Karyn Kammann
National President - CWLA Inc

QUEENSLAND

Best wishes to all for 2009.

Both here in Queensland and in Victoria the year has not commenced very well with the flooding in North Queensland and the dreadful fires in Victoria. One cannot imagine what these people are suffering. To all those affected be assured of our ongoing prayers and support.

To all the branches and States I thank you most sincerely for all the letters, cards and emails of support which have come to the State executive from you. These messages are being passed on to the members in the affected areas.

Since last I wrote for the newsletter a successful State conference was held in Townsville in September 2008. We were happy to welcome to the conference Karyn Kammann, our National President, and Brenda Finlayson, WUCWO Board member and Vice President General.

Following the conference in Townsville I was happy to be present at the New South Wales State Conference held in Parramatta and I thank the ladies at the conference for their friendship and care.



Brenda Finlayson, Joan Armstrong and Karyn Kammann

The theme which we have chosen for the State for 2009/2010 is "Following Jesus in Hope, Trust and Love." We will be having our State AGM and Council Meeting in Brisbane on the weekend 7/8 March and a special Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Brian Finnigan on Monday 9 March at Holy Family Church, Indooroopilly. During the Mass the new members of the State Executive will be installed. The delegates will be attending from Brisbane, Cairns, Mackay, Townsville, and St George.

I am aware that two ladies received community awards at the beginning of the year. Millie

On February 17 this year, Archbishop Philip Wilson launched the Caritas 2009 Project Compassion Campaign at the CWL Child Care Centre, the theme for this year being an **“Environment to Grow In”**. Our children are fortunate to be growing up in a safe and nurturing environment – but not every child around the world is so lucky.

SA Caritas Director, Brendan O’Donohue, spoke at the launch and told the children and those parents present, that money raised through the Lenten project will help give other parents the opportunity to offer their children a “better environment to grow in, no matter where they live in the world”.

*(Text taken from “Charity, Work, Loyalty”
A History of the C.W.L. in Sth Aust 1914-1979
R. Schumann)*

Pauline Victory
President - South Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES

The State Council Meeting of CWLA-NSW Inc was held from 13-15 February 2009. Delegates from all Member Organisations were present. Reports were presented after which discussions and information took place. Member Organisations are functioning well spiritually, socially and financially.

Contributions are made to various organisations such as Caritas, The Institute for East Timor Studies, Youth Off The Streets, Breast Cancer, Wrap with Love and many local groups. All take part in World Day of Prayer with some Dioceses being the only Church involved as women from other denominations are unable to host this Day. Members of the Member Organisations are involved in their local parishes in many ways such as preparation of liturgy, extra-ordinary ministers as well as readers.

CWLA-NSW Inc participates in days of importance such as Mary Help of Christians, Maria Goretti and Mary MacKillop. 2009 is the 100th Anniversary of the death of Blessed Mary MacKillop. I am sure there will be many activities to mark this special occasion and perhaps the announcement by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI of her canonization.

CWLA-NSW Inc was well represented at the Asia-Pacific Assembly of WUCWO and anticipates we will be able to attend the World Assembly of WUCWO wherever it is held.

We wish the National Executive our best wishes

in the preparation of the National Conference and hopefully, New South Wales will be represented with great numbers crossing the Nullarbor.

Have A Heart Luncheon



On Tuesday 10 February, Sydney, Broken Bay, Wollongong and State members and friends gathered in Polding Centre for a “Have A Heart” Luncheon. Women looking ravishing in their red were welcomed by new Sydney President Loretta Chester in a room full of red hearts, red balloons and red raffle gifts. We all enjoyed nibbles while each table tried to out-do the other in the “Male Heartthrobs” Quiz. A chicken salad lunch, followed by strawberry cheesecake, heart cakes and mints was thoroughly enjoyed by all. To start the year together in an atmosphere of fun and being able to make a generous donation to the Heart Foundation was truly wonderful.

When invitations are received, say “yes”, step out of your comfort zone and open yourself up to marvellous possibilities. A big thank you to everyone who attended and helped on the day.

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

The members of the Catholic Women’s League in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle began the

year with Mass and a Commissioning Ceremony on Saturday, 20 February at Our Lady Help of Christians Church, Mallabula at Port Stephens.

Parish Priest, Father Derek Garner was the president.

Following Mass our new President, Margo Nancarrow received the Diocesan candle from outgoing President, Ann Hogan. Margo invited her Executive to stand with her and all members present recited a Prayer of Commitment. Margo thanked Ann and her Executive for their dedication during their term of office.



Ann Hogan with Margo Nancarrow

We then adjourned to Margo's home for a delightful lunch followed by a brief meeting.

Our thanks go to Margo and John for their hospitality, and also a big thank you to a couple of "honorary" CWL husbands who support us with such generosity.

Catherine McGrath
President - CWL-NSW Inc.

VICTORIA/WAGGA WAGGA

We wish to thank League members Australia-wide for their prayers at this time of tragedy here in Victoria. The loss of life, homes, and townships has seen the outpouring of support for those who have lost everything including their neighbours, in the fires. While some of our members' land was burnt, at this stage we believe that none have lost their homes though many within their communities have. The loss of farm animals has been great. The fire came within 15 feet of one member's home. We pray that a tragedy like this never happens again. We also wish to thank Elsa Muzio,

WUCWO Board Member Argentina and WUCWO President General Karen Hurley for their prayers at this time.

This year we welcomed our new General President Jeanette Sheahan who took office on 1 January. Jeanette will bring her own charisma to this position. Our year started with a mini retreat given by our Chaplain, Dean Gerard Johnson. This was followed by the celebration of the Eucharist where we were able to offer prayers for the victims of the bush fires.

On 13 March Archbishop Denis Hart will launch our DVD "More than Tea and Cakes" at Mary Glowrey House. This DVD has a pedagogic element that ties into aspects of Year 12 Religion and Society. Our plan is to get it into our Catholic Schools. It has been trialled in schools and proved to be very successful.

In conjunction with Anima Education, the course "Reading Paul" continues this year at Mary Glowrey House. It started in February 2008 and will finish in June 2009. David Schutz, our lecturer, has taken us on the journey that Paul travelled in his preaching of the Gospel. It has been an amazing journey for all who attend.

The Social Questions Committee prepared a submission on "Religion and Belief in the 21st Century". The Australian Human Rights Commission called for submissions. A further supplementary submission was sent when further information came to hand from the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. This seems to be a well organised project which could have a grave effect on the practice of our faith.

Madge Fahy
Asst Secretary - Victoria/Wagga Wagga

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

From all members in Western Australia, greetings and best wishes to our sisters in the League throughout Australia. It is not easy to say "Have a Good Year" to all when we look at the devastation of the bush fires in Victoria and the floods in Queensland - here in our deep south we too have seen fire destroy some homes in Bridgetown and surrounding areas! One really can't take it all in - the personal belongings - the treasures - the homes and contents which have taken years of hard work and toil - gone in a matter of

minutes or hours. In our own State again here we see hundreds of families devastated by the closing of the nickel mine in Ravensthorpe - small communities that had looked forward in hope to things becoming bigger and brighter are now left completely devastated - its hard to take it all in.

Then we see the other side of it - the people all over Australia joining together in prayers and support giving millions of dollars together with clothing and furniture - although it is a country in devastation, it is also a country of hope, one to which we are proud to belong. To our sisters in these grief stricken areas we send our prayers and support.

So we begin the year of 2009 in Western Australia - our work with Catholic Women's League continues. In April we will again host our Annual President's Morning Tea. In May we will travel South to join our sisters in the Bunbury Diocese for their AGM. In June we have a Day of Reflection and Prayer with the Sisters of St. Joseph in South Perth and then we go to the biggest of them all - our National Conference to be held in Perth Sunday 30 August to Wednesday 2 September 2009.

On behalf of all members of the League in Western Australia we welcome you to our State - it will be great renewing old friendships and making new ones! I know the National Team has been working hard in organising this conference - so "Come to the West and enjoy our hospitality and what will be a wonderful conference" – see you then.

Shalom

Georgie Bruce-Smith
State President - Western Australia

TASMANIA

The League in Tasmania is very fortunate, and proud, to have located in the Hobart CBD premises provided by the Hobart City Council, affectionately known as The Centre, in which we conduct a Craft Shop, Tea-Room and provide toilet facilities for the public. The hours of opening are 10am to 3pm, Monday to Friday. It is staffed by volunteers.

The stock for the Craft Room is provided by members and 20% of the sales are retained by the committee for running costs.

Having become involved in collecting and distributing knitting for AIDS babies we have processed literally thousands of garments. Some of these donations have also gone to Pregnancy Support, St. Vincent de Paul, Samaritan's Purse and the Benevolent Society.

An expectation of the Hobart City Council is that the toilets are kept in excellent condition. Recently a survey was done by "The Sunday Tasmanian" of public toilets in Hobart and ours were acclaimed the most hygienic in town. The article provided great exposure for the Centre and many more people became aware of our presence in the city. Some people pop in mainly wanting a chat and listening becomes quite an apostolate.



Members gathered for Monthly Meeting



Sheila Quinn with Lillian Deane

A Canadian visitor to Hobart took the opportunity to look up the League's website and rang to arrange to call in to the Centre. As it happened one of the branches was having its usual monthly meeting there and invited her to join in. Her name was Sheila Quinn and she is the British Columbia and Yukon Provincial Legislation Chairperson. Her

time with us was limited, but allowed for a photo. It was taken in the craft room and some of the items for sale appear in the background.

Lillian Deane
President - Tasmania

CANBERRA GOULBURN ARCHDIOCESE

Greetings for 2009! May the year ahead be happy and productive.

At the time of writing the Queensland floods and Victorian fires are much in our minds and prayers. We commiserate with those whose lives have been affected by them.

The Branches and Regions throughout the Canberra/Goulburn Archdiocese are presently involved with Annual General Meetings. We express our best wishes to those taking on Executive roles for their term of office; and to those who have retired after long and faithful service we extend our appreciation of their efforts.

It is with great pleasure that I announce the opening of two new branches of the League at Toross and Moruya NSW on 19 February 2009. We are also hopeful of the establishment of a new branch in our Country Region of the Archdiocese shortly. Please remember in your prayers the efforts of everyone concerned and for the success of the Branches.

Plans are well in hand for the 59th Annual General Meeting/Conference of the Archdiocesan Council to take place at St. Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre in Galong NSW on 16 May 2009. Nominations are presently being sought for all executive positions on the Council.

As an affiliate of Australian Church Women, Catholic Women's League will support the Annual World Day of Prayer Service and Luncheon at the Yarralumla Uniting Church on Friday 6 March. It is of interest to note that the Women from World Day of Prayer Committee of Papua New Guinea have prepared the material for this year's service - they are members of the PNG Council of Churches.

A number of International Women's Day functions have been planned for Canberra during early March and will be supported by League members.

Looking forward to the National Biennial Conference in Perth.

Jacqueline Hipwell
President - Canberra/Goulburn

**ARE YOU READY?
IS YOUR BAG PACKED?
HAVE YOU BOOKED YOUR
ACCOMMODATION?**

**YOUR
2009 CWLA NATIONAL CONFERENCE
BECKONS YOU TO
WESTERN AUSTRALIA WHERE
YOU WILL BE GUARANTEED AN
EXCELLENT CONFERENCE, A GOOD
TIME AND GREAT HOSPITALITY**

**OPENING MASS
SUNDAY AFTERNOON 30 AUGUST
CONFERENCE
FROM MONDAY 31 AUGUST
'TIL WEDNESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER
CONFERENCE DINNER
WEDNESDAY NIGHT 2 SEPT**

**GUEST SPEAKERS INCLUDE:
CELIA HAMMOND -
VICE CHANCELLOR OF NOTRE DAME
UNIVERSITY
FATHER TONY CHIERA - VICAR
GENERAL BUNBURY DIOCESE
KYLIE FORTH - A VERY DETERMINED
YOUNG LADY
FATHER THAI VU - CATHOLIC PRIEST
- VIETNAMESE REFUGEE
AND MORE.....**

**REGISTRATION FORMS ARE
ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER
PLEASE TAKE A COPY FOR YOURSELF
AND ANOTHER FOR A FELLOW
TRAVELLER**

Social Issues Convenor Report



The following articles are taken from National Social Issues Convenor Betty Roberts' recent Social Issues Newsletter (February) – there are many more articles contained in the newsletter which is available through all MO Social Issues Convenors.

A CENTRE FOR FAITH, ETHICS AND SOCIETY AT SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

A new research centre has opened at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney. The Centre's purpose is to promote the study of Catholic intellectual and moral tradition with a particular focus on faith and ethics and their application and integration into society. The use of reason within the context of the Catholic tradition will ground the Centre's capacity to contribute positively to public debate on social issues.

"The centre will help to facilitate student's engagement in the ethical dimensions of their prospective professions with the aim that they enter the working world with a coherent and practical framework within which to address both professional and social issues".

Given the ethical issue above, just one of many, this course is both welcome and timely.

GROWTH IN THE USE OF ILLICIT DRUGS

Australians are among the highest illicit drug users in the OECD. (Source, UNOCD, World Drug Report – 2006)

Drug Free Australia is working towards having this fact acknowledged and the current policy reviewed. Young people need to be informed of both the short and long-term affects of alcohol and drug use before they begin using them. Every life lost to drugs, relationship destroyed, family and friends robbed to pay for the 'habit', walking on egg shells to calm the 'craving monster', homes destroyed, marriages ended, children deprived of a parent or parents, families devastated, violence, accidents

and lost potential point to gross negligence on the part of our policy makers.

Ten Actions to address the problem:

1. The Australian government needs to acknowledge the drug problem and find the **political will** to address the damage to Australian individuals and families resulting from illicit drug use.
2. Existing government advisory councils need to be reviewed to ensure their objectives are aligned to illicit drug prevention.
3. Reduce supply and adopt innovative proven methods to reduce demand and provide drug free rehabilitation aimed at abstinence.
4. Examine world's best practice in countries that are making significant inroads into levels of illicit drug use e.g. Sweden.
5. Adopt models similar to the anti-tobacco campaigns that impacted positively on attitudes to smoking.
6. Move from a policy of Harm Minimisation that never effectively implemented primary drug prevention and has resorted to 'bandaid' measures in a vain attempt to address the problem.
7. Specific targeting of illicit drugs and the illicit use of prescribed drugs will allow for more careful monitoring and reliable records.
8. Sadly illicit drug use has become socially acceptable as demonstrated by the use of terms like 'party drugs' and 'recreational drug use'.
9. We need to expand the parameters of responsibility and action and send a clear and unequivocal message to the community that these drugs are illegal and unsanctioned because they are dangerous.
10. Use of drugs licit and illicit is not only a health issue – it also embraces social security, border control, the judiciary, law enforcement and education.

A 'whole of community approach' is required. Affected families and concerned members of the community need to demand action. To do nothing is to court disaster.

Catholic Women's League Aust. Inc. has pledged their support for DFA. The DFA director in your State or Territory may be contacted to supply a speaker. Email: admin@drugfree.org.au

**Betty Roberts OAM
Social Convenor**

ABOUT BIOETHICS



Once upon a time two lovely, loving and caring people fell in love and got married. One person was a young man and the other a young woman. In time as a result of their loving relationship they were blessed with a baby whom they considered a gift from God and they pledged to care and nurture their child. Everyone was happy for them, including their friends who sadly were unable to conceive a child.

Is this just a 'fairy story' with a happy ending for all? No, of course not. We have sadness and compassion for couples who really want a child and are unable to do so. These couples undertake various treatments at considerable financial and sometimes emotional cost to allow them to achieve their dream. It is sad, though, that occasionally a child can be seen as a commodity, a status symbol, a proof of success and a societal expectation.

The Catholic Catechism (2378) says that, "*A child is not something owed to one, but is a gift, the 'supreme gift of marriage' is a human person. A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged "right to a child" would lead*".... And, further, (2379) "*The Gospel shows that physical sterility is not an absolute evil.*"

Described by some couples – and the media – as a last resort for 'parentage' is the act or process of surrogacy. *The issue of surrogacy has been the cause of great moral, ethical and legal debate within the community. However, with increasing demand for infertility treatment and a decline in the number of children available for adoption, it is possible that more Australians will start to consider surrogacy as an alternative* (Better Health Channel, www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au).

What is surrogacy?

Surrogacy is when a woman agrees to become pregnant, carries and delivers a child for a contracted party/couple. She may be the child's

genetic mother or she may be a gestational carrier after having been implanted with an embryo.

A surrogacy arrangement involves the planned separation of the child from its birth mother soon after birth. The separation of a child from its birth mother is never a desirable situation. In a surrogacy situation the separation occurs to fulfil the desires of adults rather than to meet the needs of the child.

Altruistic surrogacy is a situation where the surrogate receives no financial reward for her pregnancy or the relinquishment of the child (although usually all expenses related to the pregnancy and birth are paid by the intended parents such as medical expenses, maternity clothing, and other related expenses).

Commercial surrogacy is a form of surrogacy in which a gestational carrier is paid to carry a child to maturity in her womb and is usually resorted to by well off infertile couples who can afford the cost involved or people who save and borrow in order to complete their dream of being parents. This procedure is legal in several countries including in India where it is reaching industry proportions.

A pamphlet from Sydney IVF states, "Surrogacy means having IVF; it's expensive, and there are no Medicare rebates. The eggs from the infertile woman are fertilised with her own partner's sperm. A resulting embryo is then transferred to the uterus of the surrogate, who carries the pregnancy and has the baby. Genetically it's the child of the infertile couple, but it is a child to whom the surrogate (the pregnancy and birth mother) may have an understandable and ongoing attachment".

Government Inquiries

Currently (16 February 2009), the NSW Legislative Council, through the Standing Committee on Law and Justice is conducting an inquiry, '*Legislation on altruistic surrogacy in NSW*' to look at and obtain submissions from the public about whether NSW legislation requires amendment to better deal with altruistic surrogacy and other related matters. Public hearings are scheduled for 18 and 19 March in Sydney. If you wish to look at some of the submissions, go to www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parliament/Committee.nsf/V3ListCtees, choose *Law and Justice; Legislation on altruistic surrogacy in NSW*.

At the national level, the national Standing Committee of Attorneys General (SCAG), with the ministerial councils for Community Services

and Health, have released a paper calling for submissions on a national model for surrogacy regulation. The proposal is released for public discussion and a national model will be developed after there has been thorough community consultation. If adopted as proposed, Australian couples who have children via surrogacy would be able to apply to the courts for legal recognition as parents.

Under the proposal, commercial surrogacy would still remain illegal in Australia but it allows surrogate mothers to be reimbursed for losses and expenses incurred due to pregnancy. (Submissions close 16 April 2009)

The laws on surrogacy vary throughout Australia. In all states in Australia, the surrogate mother is deemed by the law to be the legal mother of the child as well, and any surrogacy agreement giving custody to others is void. In addition in many states arranging commercial surrogacy is a criminal offence, although New South Wales currently has no legislation governing surrogacy at all. In New Zealand there is currently no law on surrogacy. Intending parents are usually referred to the National Ethics Committee, which gives approval on a case-by-case basis according to a set of guidelines. These include a requirement that the surrogacy be non-commercial.

What does the Church say?

The Church recognizes the legitimacy of the desire for a child and understands the suffering of couples struggling with problems of fertility. Such a desire, however, should not override the dignity of every human life to the point of absolute supremacy. The desire for a child cannot justify the "production" of offspring; just as the desire not to have a child cannot justify the abandonment or destruction of a child once he or she has been conceived.

The proposal that embryos 'left over' from IVF could be put at the disposal of infertile couples as a treatment for infertility is not ethically acceptable and any form of surrogate motherhood could also lead to other problems of a medical, psychological and legal nature.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, (2376) "Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral. These techniques ...infringe the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage".

In *Dignitas Personae* it is noted, "Techniques which assist procreation "are not to be rejected on the grounds that they are artificial. As such, they bear witness to the possibilities of the art of medicine. But they must be given a moral evaluation in reference to the dignity of the human person, who is called to realize his vocation from God to the gift of love and the gift of life".

The New Zealand Nathaniel Centre for Bioethics points out that "The Catholic Church opposes traditional and gestational surrogacy primarily because it offends against the dignity of the child, the uniqueness of the mother-child relationship, and the sanctity of marriage. It also treats women and children as commodities".

So whilst we appreciate reasons why a couple would resort to a surrogacy arrangement, we need to consider all facets of the issue.

Margo Nancarrow
Bioethics Convenor



Prayer

A Special Lenten Fast

- Give up harsh words: use generous ones.
- Give up Unhappiness: take up gratitude.
- Give up anger: take up gentleness and patience.
- Give up pessimism: take up hope and optimism.
- Give up worrying: take up trust in God.
- Give up complaining: value what you have.
- Give up stress: take up prayer.
- Give up judging others: discover Jesus within them.
- Give up sorrow and bitterness: fill your heart with joy.
- Give up selfishness: take up compassion for others.
- Give up being unforgiving: learn reconciliation.
- Give up words: fill yourself with silence, and listen to others.

Anonymous, Latin America

Greetings from WUCWO

Be assured of prayers for all those suffering most from the ravages of the wildfires.

I cannot imagine the horror or devastation, but I pray that the Lord will send his grace and strength to those in most need.

May the souls who have perished find rest in God's loving arms.
In Christ Jesus,

Karen M. Hurley
President General - WUCWO

In prayer and sentiment, I am with all the Australian people in the sad situation which has occurred.

The fire has devastated huge areas of your beautiful country, and has resulted in great sadness in thousands of homes, which today lament the loss of loved ones, the sadness of injury and the sad consequences of the 'disappeared', with the loss of material possessions, the 'many times' fruit of a whole life of honest work and permanent effort. The Lord sustains and fortifies them so they may remain firm in hope.

A fraternal embrace,

Elsa Muzio
WUCWO Board Member - Argentina

Queen's Birthday Honours

Congratulations to Mrs Pauline Marlborough from Attadale in Western Australia who received an Order of Australia Medal for services to education, particularly as a specialist teacher working with students with special needs.

Mrs. Marlborough spent time in New Guinea teaching in classrooms that had ceilings and floors and little else. In 1970 Pauline returned to Western Australia where she set up an educational unit in Esperance for children with special needs. For the past twenty years Pauline worked at the Fremantle Primary Behaviour Centre with children from preschool to Year 7.

Editorial Panel

Karyn Kammann, Maria Parkinson
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