



NATIONAL WALK FOR VALUES SYDNEY

Saturday, 12 April 2008 – Sydney

Introductory talk by
Professor Roger Packham

Welcome to the 2008 National Walk for Values. This Sydney walk is being replicated around Australia today in Canberra, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. Australia has a long history of getting out to walk so as to let the world know what is being thought of a particular issue. Walking for *something you believe in* is acceptable in Australia, and is not seen as political or divisive. Today we are walking to promote the values that underpin our Australian society – those that make it so desirable to belong to.

These values are being promoted here as their core essence so all can support them: Who can argue with the values of Love, **Truth, Right action, Peace and Non-Violence**? These are universal and prized by all humans. Men, women and children over the centuries have been willing to lay down their lives for them, and we can all recognize instantly when they are not being followed. Supporting such values leads to a *good and just* society, while ignoring them leads to a breakdown in our society.

It is these values that have guided the lives of those men and women we all recognize as inspirational, and who have influenced us for the betterment of the world – people like the Australians Caroline Chisholm, Charles Perkins, Fred Hollows; and from further afield Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, and Mother Teresa. Their example clearly shows how values need to be *worthwhile*, not just of *economic* worth as is often promoted in the 'global economy' of today.

Modern living is undermining the long held principles of behaviour practiced by the generations before us, as we face new challenges such as climate change, and the concerns of many about science, commerce and politics and their lack of boundaries in terms of ethics.

The simple holding up of placards and banners with the five values is enough to remind all who see them that these are fundamental to what and who we are as human beings and as Australians. They enhance all aspects of society – personal, family, work, sport and governance, and the walk celebrates these in a fun and interactive way. Their practice helps to achieve a just and sustainable society despite its increasing complexity and ongoing change.

It is these values that we want to see permeating through our education system, so we can overcome the alienation apparent in so many young people today. Yet the first educators are the parents and the local society within which the child grows, so these values need to permeate our whole society – it takes a whole village to educate a child as one African saying goes.

As you walk, can I ask you to reflect on each of these five values - Love; Peace; Truth; Right Action; and Non-Violence - and their role in **Your** life. How, in Gandhi's words, can you **Be** the change you want in the world. Then after the walk, take one value each day and strive to enact it in your home, your workplace and your leisure activities, for it is only in the practice of these values that they become real.

In this way we celebrate what it means to be Australian, and we ensure that Australian society continues to respond to all its challenges in positive and worthwhile ways.

Enjoy the walk!

Roger Packham

12th April 2008