

## Olive ribbon – it's a sign of peace for Western Sydney

By Sharyn McCowen, *The Catholic Weekly*, 29 October 2014



Western Sydney community leaders are tackling growing intolerance and social discord in the region with an Olive Ribbon campaign.

More than 400 olive ribbons were distributed at the campaign's launch as part of the Western Sydney Assembly of Sydney Alliance on 29 October. Wearers pledged to respect all Australians as members of a diverse but united community.

Sydney archdiocesan Justice and Peace Promoter Fr Peter Smith said the olive branch was a universal symbol of peace.

"By wearing an olive ribbon Western Sydney residents will make a powerful statement embracing unity and respect over division and conflict.

"The ribbons reflect the solidarity of our diverse community, and that diversity makes us stronger."

Fr Peter said Western Sydney's social cohesion was under attack from groups peddling hatred and intolerance. "We cannot afford to let bigotry take a hold in our society. That's why so many groups have banded together under the banner of the Sydney Alliance to create the Olive Ribbon campaign, and to promote the values of diversity and inclusiveness."

Leaders of faith and community groups, and representatives from education institutions and union organisations attended the launch at Parramatta Town Hall this week.