



Media Release

December 1, 2006

**Statement from the Australian Catholic Bishops on the
detention of David Hicks**

Mr David Hicks has been detained without trial at Guantanamo Bay since 2001, with no ability to contest the accusations against him. There is now heightened concern for his physical and mental health, in conditions which reputable human rights agencies have said are tantamount to torture.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference today called for the Australian citizen to be given a prompt and just trial or returned to Australia.

If Mr Hicks has a case to answer he should be tried without further delay by a competent and independent tribunal with protections of the rule of law that all Australians would expect. A continuation of the current situation is not acceptable.

Australia has a duty as a member of the world community to uphold standards of justice and decency. Historically, Australia and its allies have a proud record in supporting these principles, both within and outside their borders.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference calls on the Australian and U.S. Governments to resolve this issue urgently.

Contact: Bishop Christopher Saunders on 0418 260 155 or John Ferguson on 02 9956 5811.