



CHRISTIAN Climate Change ACTION KIT



2 GREENHOUSE GASES, RELEASED THROUGH USE OF FOSSIL FUELS, LAND USE CHANGES AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES, FORM THE SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION FOR HUMAN-INDUCED CLIMATE CHANGE. BUT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FAITH, THE CAUSES GO FAR DEEPER.

We need to understand how we see ourselves as part of Creation—in terms of how humanity relates to the natural world, how we relate to each other, and people of faith would also say how we relate to God.

Ecology also tells us that human well-being and the natural world are interconnected. Human flourishing depends upon ecological flourishing, and environmental damage impacts on the health and welfare of humans. As people of faith, to acknowledge the spark of the divine in people and the natural world is to respect and care for both. This is why the issue of climate change is a deeply moral one. It also has profound justice implications: the people who are least responsible for greenhouse gas pollution will suffer disproportionately from its effects. This includes people across the world who live in poverty and consume few resources. It also includes people like farmers in Australia who suffer disproportionately from drought. And critically, it includes children and future generations.

From this perspective we ask ourselves deep questions. From where do we derive fulfilment? What is the meaning in our lives? Does it really come through actions that damage Creation and its peoples, and alienate us from them? As people living in an affluent country, how many material possessions, how much material wealth is enough? How can we better connect with others (human and non-human) in our world? In practice, how would concern for Creation be demonstrated in our lives? Is ensuring that our own lifestyles are not harmful to others the full extent of our ecological moral responsibility? Or are we called to a broader civic engagement, to promote policies which will serve the common good?

While there are many encouraging exceptions, Caring for Creation is not traditionally integrated into the culture of most Christian communities. There is a sound theological basis for it, and many excellent statements by Church leaders, but the challenge remains for the majority of local churches to substantially incorporate caring for the environment into the life of their Church. This requires at least some people in a faith community to make it a priority to acquaint themselves with the theology and, to an extent, the science. This is needed to help their community move towards an integration of Creation Care into their expression of communal and individual faith.

It may take a couple of years, but an ethic of caring for Creation should begin to be expressed in the various dimensions of community life:

- » in the liturgical life of the community
- » in the way properties are managed
- » in the ecological awareness and lifestyles of members of the congregation
- » in the community's understanding and living out of its Mission.

We hope you will take on this challenge to help your faith community become ecologically aware. In addition to the material in this kit and that available on our website, ARRCC can also provide direct support—please contact us at info@arrcc.org.au.

Yours in faith,



Ms Thea Ormerod, President
Australian Religious Response to Climate Change



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Steps2Sustainability

A PRACTICAL WAY FOR COMMUNITIES TO TURN
CONCERN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE INTO ACTION,
AND TO START LEADING BY EXAMPLE



BEFORE YOU BEGIN: START A SUSTAINABILITY TEAM

For a faith community to go on a journey towards sustainability—towards the flourishing of all Creation—it is really important that there are people committed to driving the process.

The fact that you are reading this indicates that you are probably the likely candidate to start the ball rolling! We strongly recommend that you seek out other like-minded people from your faith community, and form a sustainability team. It is not always easy for one person to press on by themselves, but you'll be amazed what a small group of inspired people can achieve! This can be a new team, or it can be an existing team that takes on this extra role—even just one or two other people is a good starting point. At this point, we recommend that you **"come aboard the ARRCC"**— register with us and tell us about your faith community's commitment to take action on climate change. We can support you on your journey.

We suggest that you try to meet outside (if the weather permits!). You could try a park or garden, to grow your awareness of being part of Creation, not just talking about it as a cerebral exercise! An important part of making working for sustainability sustainable, is growing your own enjoyment of your relationship and appreciation of Creation and how it connects with your faith. Doing this with others can be even more enriching.

The basics (first meeting)

You might be well experienced in leading groups, or it might be the first time. Here are some suggestions of what to cover at your first meeting:

- » Ask each member to share about their own story about how they connect with Creation, and how this integrates with their faith. You could start each meeting by each sharing how you have connected with Creation with your faith since you last met and what this has meant.
- » How would each of you personally like to grow in your connection with and care for Creation? Which of the **Steps2Sustainability** do you feel most passionate about? Which do you want to learn more about?
- » Establish how often you want to meet. Perhaps sometimes you will meet to talk about plans for the **Steps2Sustainability**, or just to connect as part of Creation together, whether just for a walk, or to plant something together or take part in bush regeneration—or you may have other ideas.

You might like to explore the following at this or subsequent meetings:

Idea 1: Take the temperature of your faith community

- » How does your faith community currently connect with Creation? Where do you think people stand on the issue of climate change and sustainability? Think of all the different demographic groups. Consider how these views are reflected in teaching, conversations, how the faith community operates, activities the faith community runs/is involved with, how we spend funds etc.
- » What are the barriers to your faith community becoming more sustainable?
- » What are the information gaps for your faith community that your team could help fill?

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: START A TEAM

Idea 2: Identify existing strengths in your faith community

- » Who in your faith community has knowledge or skills to contribute towards becoming more sustainable?
- » What are ways that your faith community are already acting sustainably? How can you affirm these, create space for stories and ideas to be shared and make these actions infectious?
- » What other groups involved in sustainability are faith community members already engaged with?
- » Brainstorm opportunities, small and large, how you can engage your faith community in the **Steps2Sustainability**, and provide opportunities for them to connect with Creation (or become more aware of how they already are connected as part of Creation.) From this list, identify which of these opportunities would be achievable to start with.

Idea 3: Talk to your leaders

- » Who do you need to talk to get their support for doing **Steps2Sustainability** with your faith community? Meet with them and explain what you would like to do, and ask how they can support your team to get your faith community on board. If it's not possible to do the **Steps2Sustainability** with the whole faith community, perhaps you could do it with a small group, Bible study group or youth group.

RESOURCES

- » *Articles on connecting with Creation:*
www.arrcc.org.au/reflect-writings
www.smh.com.au/opinion/children-must-experience-nature-in-order-to-learn-its-worth-saving-20121121-29qbp.html
- » *TEAR Australia's guide to sharing your story with others:*
www.tear.org.au/static/files/resources/advocacyInfo-NarrativeWorkshop.pdf
- » *Creative thinking and brainstorming tools*
www.creative-communities.com/learning-centre/
www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_CT.htm

NEXT STEPS

You're now ready to start **Steps2Sustainability**. The followings steps are not meant to be prescriptive—you don't necessarily have to do one step before you start the next (for example, you might have already started on some of the later steps before you heard about the **Steps2Sustainability**). Or some earlier steps might not be suitable for your faith community (for example, your faith community may not have its own building—in which case switching the building over to GreenPower may not make sense). So feel free to adapt the **Steps2Sustainability** to suit your particular situation—you and your Sustainability Team will be best placed to work out what is appropriate for your faith community and the surrounding community.

STEP 1: ENGAGE YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY

A great way to get your faith community interested in taking action on climate change is to start talking with them about it.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. **Romans 12:1–2***

There are many angles to approach this from. The “Tools for Learning” section provides resources for you to learn about the issue and educate your faith community. But while it is important to understand some of the science behind climate change there are also other aspects to think about. We need to keep talking about what justice means in this context as people of faith—if we have been part of the societies that have contributed the most to climate change, what response are we required to make to vulnerable communities who made the least contribution to climate change, but suffer the most? What does biblical justice mean here? Some of this is also covered in the Tools for Learning section.

As people of faith, we also need to re-discover what our scriptures have to say about Creation—how we are to relate to it, how we learn about God's character through the imagery of Creation shown throughout. The “Tools for Reflection” section provides some resources for connecting it all with our faith.

You might like to integrate the reflection and learning tools throughout your **Steps2Sustainability** journey, interspersing some education with practical actions to give your faith community an action-reflection experience.

To start with, here are a few ideas you might like to use along the way to help people connect with the roots of our faith tradition, as well as looking towards a future of hope. Remember that people learn in different ways, so it's great if you can provide different styles of opportunities for people to engage with the issues.

Idea 1: Reclaiming the context for our relationship with God

*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. **Genesis 1:31***

Just like you did with your sustainability team, start helping your faith community connect with Creation.

Often, we forget that in Genesis, Creation was the very context for our relationship with God. This is something many of us have lost, with much of our lives, work and even worship conducted indoors, shut off from Creation. We need to consciously reclaim this, and start with some practical small steps at our place of worship, whether it is bringing more of Creation indoors so it is part of people's consciousness as they worship, or whether we take the people outdoors more to relate with God in the context of Creation. Either way, we need to remember that Creation is good, we are part of it, and the more we interact with it, the more we will understand our Creator and our need to protect Creation. This needs to be the basis for our action on climate change and sustainability—without a strong inner motivation that comes from our faith, we will be in danger of burning out.

Here is one activity you could try:

- » Hold a worship service outdoors and give people ways to interact with Creation as part of the worship. You might like to read out scriptures that talk about creation, or create reflection stations outdoors where people can read scriptures while interacting with Creation, eg. Read out Genesis 1, then get people to walk around the grounds of your place of worship and the streets around it, observing the goodness of God's Creation that surrounds your gathering place.

STEP 1: ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

Idea: 2 Inform your faith community about human impacts on the environment and human responsibility

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth, right up to the present time.

Romans 8:22

The Creator Spirit is crying because the deep spiritual bonds with the land and its people have been broken.

The land is crying because it is slowly dying without the bond of spiritual life. The people are crying because they long for a restoration of that deep spiritual bond with the Creator Spirit and the land.

(from Rainbow Spirit Theology: Towards an Australian Aboriginal Theology)

Human-induced climate change is a symptom of a broken Creation, and more specifically, the result of the way humans have used and exploited the earth. We need to be willing to see the reality of this, learn about how it happened, and what needs to be done practically and structurally to change this relationship with the earth. We need to reclaim our roles as carers and stewards of Creation.

There are a number of ways you could do this, through the worship services, communications to the congregation, small groups, or from your church leader.

Here are some activities you could try:

- » Encourage your spiritual leader/s to preach on climate change and to include readings, reflections and prayers about Creation and climate change in the worship service.
- » Give a short presentation or talk about climate change during the announcements.
- » Invite a guest speaker to come and talk to you about climate change. We may be able to help you find a speaker, especially if you are based in greater Sydney, Melbourne or Canberra—just contact us.
- » Have a special event about climate change—maybe you could watch one of the documentaries that have been produced, such as *An Inconvenient Truth Sequel: Truth to Power* and *This Changes Everything*, followed by a discussion session afterwards. TEAR Australia has some great DVD resources.
- » If your church has Bible study groups or small groups, let them know about study resources that will help them engage with issues of faith, climate change and justice. (See Tools for Reflection resource list).
- » Show dvds and share stories about how climate change is impacting poor communities around the world.

Idea 3: Remember the poor

All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

Galatians 2:10

As you educate your faith community about climate change, help people keep in their consciousness that it is the world's poorest and most vulnerable people who are impacted the most.





STEP 1: ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

Here are some ideas:

- » Displaced by a changing climate: Ask people to share with the person next to them any times they have moved house, and reasons for moving. They might like to share what the experience was like for them, and whether the reasons for moving impacted whether it was a good or bad experience. After a few minutes, draw people's attention together and share a story about people in developing countries who are displaced because of climate change (see below for stories). Then share with people that in the Bible, the vision of peace is where "everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid" (Micah 4:4). While this was written about peace from war and conflict, in today's context, a vision for peace would include the poor being able to enjoy the safety of their homes without fear of displacement from climate events. Give people some time in silence to reflect on what it would be like to have to become homeless because of a climate related event. You might like to lead people in a prayer for poor communities affected by climate change, or simply allow people to silently pray.
- » Let people know about organisations that have projects that support communities to adapt to climate change and reduce the risks of climate disasters. You could run fundraisers or encourage people to donate to these organisations.

Idea 4: Get your faith community to envision a new way forward

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" **Revelations 21:5**

It's important to not just be informing your community about how Creation has been broken, but to have a vision together of the renewal of Creation, and how we can be a part of this. Your faith community will no doubt have many creative ideas and visions amongst them about how you can become more sustainable together. Find ways to give space for these creative ideas to arise and be shared, and to get people excited about what you could work towards together. Also try to look at where renewal is already happening.

Here is one activity you could try:

- » Facilitate a community visioning exercise, for example, ask people to draw a picture of your faith community and what it would look like if it was more sustainable. Ask them to include a picture of themselves in the picture, showing the role they might take in this vision. Spend time sharing your pictures and visions with each other, and perhaps stick them up on the walls so that people can be inspired by each other's visions. Your team could then use some of the ideas expressed in these visions and turn them into action—you might even get clues from the pictures about who you could enlist to help!
- » Think about ways that can become regular rhythms in the life of your church to connect with Creation physically and spiritually.

RESOURCES

- » See **Tools for Learning** for information on the science and morality of climate change and how climate change is impacting poor communities around the world.
- » See **Tools for Reflection** for statements on climate change from different denominational leaders, prayer resources and sample sermons/homilies.
- » *Community visioning resources:* www.gdrc.org/ngo/vision-dev.html
- » *Stories of displacement:* www.irinnews.org/InDepthMain.aspx?indepthid=73&reportid=82633

STEPS 2 SUSTAINABILITY

STEP 2: TACKLE YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP'S CLIMATE IMPACTS

Now it's time to get practical! Getting your place of worship to lead by example is a great starting point.

Community is powerful in shaping who we are, our values, our habits—whether spoken or unspoken, the culture we create in these communities can make a big impact. How your faith community talks and acts about climate change when you are together can have a powerful effect, both on the wider community and how individuals will think about their habits at home. We want to equip you to help it become a part of everyday conversation and action of your faith community to connect with and care for Creation.

The main impacts on climate change fall into one of the following four categories:

- » energy generation
- » energy use
- » transport
- » consumption and waste.

You may wish to pick one at a time to work on, or instigate a number of small initiatives across different areas. The following pages provide a number of ideas for you to choose from or gain inspiration from.



Idea 1: Energy generation and energy use

Energy is one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore climate change. Changing the source of your faith community's energy will make a big difference to its environmental impact.

There are a number of ways that you can change the source, and the easiest way is switching to GreenPower. You can also consider installing solar panels on your buildings—the rooftops of our buildings are a vast untapped potential for capturing energy from the sun. In addition, you can switch to solar (or solar-assisted) hot water, if you have buildings that have a significant need for hot water.

Addressing climate change is not just about renewable energy. It is also about reducing our energy consumption in the first place. If our electricity demand goes down, the need for electricity generation also decreases and we reduce the impact on the natural environment. Besides this, actually reducing your energy consumption has the added benefit of reducing your energy bill.

To reduce your energy consumption, get an energy audit done at your place of worship. This helps you to identify where you can save energy. This might be as simple as turning off the lights and heating when not in use, making use of blinds or shades to prevent your building from heating up on hot days, or changing to energy efficient light bulbs. It might also include suggestions for insulating your buildings, or upgrading your appliances to energy efficient models.

Here is a suggested activity:

- » "Switching off" worship service: At the beginning of the worship service, ask people to completely switch off their mobile phones and any other devices. Invite people to walk around the building, switching off all lights, appliances and powerpoints (except for the fridge if there is one!), and ask people as they return, to sit together in silence.

Ask people to reflect on how it felt to be asked to switch off their devices, and what might be reasons behind any resistance we felt to switching off. How did it feel to be literally "switching off" together as a community? What benefits are there to switching off, for the planet, for the community, and spiritually speaking as individuals? What would be the impacts of "switching off" regularly—literally and in our minds and bodies? Get people to brainstorm ways that the church can reduce its energy use or change to renewable energy generation. Light a candle (or invite people to light individual candles) and read out or hand out Bible verses about light, darkness and stillness for people to meditate on, eg Psalm 112:4, Isaiah 58:10, Isaiah 9:2, Isaiah 42:16, Job 17:11–12, John 8:12, Psalm 46:10.

- » Another idea would be to hold a "switching off" dinner or other activity for Earth Hour in March.

RESOURCES

- » *Repower Worship guide*
www.arrcc.org.au/repower-worship
- » *Find out about community grants and rebates*
www.environment.gov.au/about-us/grants-funding
www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/grant_main.jsp
- » *Check your local council for Green Matching Grants eg*
www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/grants-and-sponsorships
- » For help with up-front financing of solar panels for your faith community, try CORENA, Citizens Own Renewable Energy Network Australia
www.corenafund.org.au/
- » For help with larger local renewable energy projects, visit the Community Power Agency's website:
www.cpagency.org.au/

STEP 2: REDUCE YOUR IMPACTS

Idea 2: Transport

We all have to get around—but often we assume that the fastest option is best, without considering the impact on our environment, with CO₂ from transport being one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. Whether it's our daily transport or how we choose to go on holidays, we need to think differently about how we get around. We need to start factoring in not only the impact on the environment, but perhaps our bodies and minds would benefit too by slowing down. We can help our faith communities become more conscious about transport by starting with thinking about how we all travel to our place of worship, and if there are other alternatives to consider that are not only better for the environment, but also help draw our community together. ARRCC's annual Walk or Ride to Worship event is one way that you can encourage your faith community to get around differently, but your community might come up with other ideas too.

Here is a suggested activity to get your faith community thinking about transport:

- » Visually map where people in your faith community live by getting people to come and put a pin on a map. Mark where your faith community is with a large red dot.
- » Get people to draw their journey from home to your place of worship, and write or draw what form of transport they normally use to get there. If they drive, get them to write down how many spare seats they have in their car.
- » The idea is not to make people feel guilty about their mode of transport, but to provide a visual mapping tool that can prompt ideas for connecting with others nearby that they could share travel with, and get ideas from others.
- » What benefits are there, apart from environmental ones, to thinking differently about how we travel to our place of worship, and everywhere else?
- » Brainstorm different ways that as a community, you could travel to your place of worship with minimum impact on the environment. Are there options to car pool or use a car share, to take public transport together, to organise a 'walking bus' or cycle together?
- » How can you take these ideas and apply them to travel in your everyday lives?

RESOURCES:

- » *ARRCC's Walk or Ride to Worship*
www.arrcc.org.au/walk_or_ride_to-worship
- » *Bike bus*
www.bikebus.org.au
- » *Bike libraries and bike share schemes*
www.newcastlebikeecologycentre.blogspot.com.au
www.melbournebikeshare.com.au
- » *Car pool websites*
www.shareuride.com.au
- » *Car share initiatives*
www.carnextdoor.com.au
www.greensharecar.com.au
www.flexicar.com.au
www.goget.com.au

Idea 3: Consumption and waste

Our society is addicted to stuff. We have an assumption that more is better, and that we all need to own everything individually. We are told by subliminal marketing and the media that unless we have things, we won't be acceptable—that there is no such thing as enough. We are told that cheaper is better, even if it exploits workers in its production processes and products are quickly disposable, contributing to landfill. Not only does it consume vast amounts of fossil fuels to produce these goods, but the greenhouse gas emissions from landfill further harm our atmosphere. It is not only consumer goods that are an issue. Food waste is also a problem. For example, Sustainability Victoria estimates that food is about 40% of what is thrown out by Victorian households. Rotting food in landfill releases methane, a greenhouse gas many times more potent than carbon dioxide. How can our faith communities expose marketing lies for what they are, and instead model a life-giving alternative?

The food we choose to eat also has an impact on climate change—meat production has a much larger environmental impact than vegetables and grains, and the miles that our food travels to get to our tables is something we need to be conscious of as well. We can encourage our congregations to think about LOAF (local, organic, animal-friendly, fairly traded) principles when considering their food. How we can also be more aware of the waste we create and reducing it—or in the case of compostable waste, even returning it to the earth as nourishment? Thinking about consumption doesn't just stop with reducing what we use and how we use it—it's also about thinking about the equal distribution of resources. How can we consume less so that resources can be freed up to support the world's poorest who are hit hardest by the impacts of climate change? How can we become more aware of their stories?

Poverty remains an issue in Australia. However, for most Australians the possibilities for cutting down our consumption and becoming aware of how we consume are endless, and we can be creative in the way we do this.

With your team, discuss:

- » What do the scriptures say about consumption, and how can you get your community talking about what is “enough” and how our consumption impacts the planet as well as our spirituality?
- » What are all the resources that your church “consumes” together? Think about the quantity, quality, where it is sourced, and how the environmental impact of these could be reduced.
- » What sort of waste does your faith community produce and do you know how much there is of it and where it goes? How can you make your faith community aware of this?
- » What does your faith community do with your waste? Are all possible recycling options in place?

Here are a few ideas to consider:

- » If your faith community shares meals together, brainstorm how these meals can be sustainably sourced—with local produce, vegetarian, with minimum packaging and processing and thinking about where the waste will go too. How could you educate your community about the environmental impact of food and LOAF principles as you eat together?
- » Could you set up a worm farm or compost at your faith community?
- » Does your community use a lot of papers? (Orders of service etc). What are other options to using disposable paper?
- » Could you host a creative event that helps people think differently about consumption—an upcycling or refashioning workshop, a clothes swap etc?
- » Are there possibilities to set up a register for your faith community to share appliances, tools or other resources?

STEP 2: REDUCE YOUR IMPACTS

RESOURCES

- » *Meat Free Day*
www.arrcc.org.au/eat-less-meat
- » *National Energy Efficiency Network (NEEN)*
www.neen.org.au/project/placesofworship/
- » *Collaborative consumption*
www.greenvillages.com.au/green-tips/our-top-collaborative-consumption-sites
www.collaborativeconsumption.com/index.php
- » *The Story of Stuff*
www.thestoryofstuff.org
- » *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle*
www.livinggreener.gov.au/waste/recycling/reduce-reuse-recycle
- » *Upcycle*
www.upcyclethat.com
- » *Hosting a Swap Party*
www.recyclingweek.planetark.org/bas/host-a-swap.cfm
- » *Composting*
www.cleanup.org.au/au/LivingGreener/composting.html
- » *Worm farming*
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/communities/languageresources/110739-Worm-farming-English.pdf
- » *Freecycle*
www.freecycle.org/group/au
- » Accessing locally grown food:
 - *Local Farmers Markets directory*
www.farmersmarkets.org.au/markets
 - *Food Connect*
www.foodconnect.com.au
 - *Harvest Hub*
www.harvesthub.com.au
 - *Aussie Farmers Direct*
www.aussiefarmers.com.au



STEP 3: REDUCE YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMPACTS AT HOME

Your daily life is your temple and your religion. When you enter into it take with you your all. Kahlil Gibran

Our daily habits are the hardest ones to change—but the powerful thing about faith communities is that coming together regularly as a group of people can help give people that ongoing encouragement, examples and opportunity for discussions and questions to help people make those changes.

People can feel very private about their daily habits, or harbour guilt about their environmental impact. We want to help you create the kind of culture that affirms people in the steps they are taking already and generates creative ideas to go further in the journey.

Just as you got your place of worship to think about transport, energy generation and energy use, consumption and waste in your gatherings together, now you can help people think about these issues in their lives at home. There are several online carbon footprint calculators that you can encourage people to use to become aware of their individual impact as a starting point, and there will be endless ideas amongst your community about ways that they can cut down their impact. Think about ways to help your faith community share ideas and celebrate positive steps forward.

Here is one idea you could try at your church:

- » Make a tree trunk and branches out of old cardboard to stick on a wall at your church. Have a pen and some leaf shaped pieces of cardboard and pins/blue tacks available nearby where people can write down the tips they have tried and pin up their leaf on the tree to encourage others. This could also be done as part of a worship service, like an offering. Alternatively, it could be displayed for a longer time, with the opportunity for people to contribute to it from week to week, perhaps reading out a couple of leaves each week to encourage people to participate and give them ideas.
- » Or could one idea from a different community member be shared each week?

Here are some suggestions for how congregation members could help each other become more sustainable in their homes:

- » Encourage people to host a Permablitz—where a group of people go to one person's house to help them set up an edible garden in a day.
- » Encourage people to do a sustainability audit of their home and invite a few people over to help them implement it (perhaps changing to energy efficient light bulbs and shower heads, setting up a compost/worm farm system etc) or have a small team in your congregation who would be willing to help people do this.
- » Encourage people to access local farmers markets or join an initiative like Food Connect that supports local farmers and helps to reduce the food miles of people's groceries. Perhaps your church or someone in your congregation could host a local collection hub.
- » Encourage people to live more simply and consume less to be able to support poor communities trying to adapt to climate change.

RESOURCES

- » *Carbon footprint calculator:* www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx
- » *Reducing energy:* www.livinggreener.gov.au/energy
- » *Cutting down on waste at home:* www.greenvillages.com.au/green-tips/top-tips-for-waste-avoidance
- » *Planning sustainable holidays:* www.greenvillages.com.au/green-tips/eco-travel-our-top-tips
- » *Permablitz:* www.permablitz.net



STEPS 2 SUSTAINABILITY

STEP 4: SPREAD THE WORD BEYOND YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY

Now that your faith community has made a start on becoming more sustainable, collectively and individually, think about working with the wider community around you to become more sustainable too.

Addressing climate change cannot be done individually—we have to work together to make society wide changes. Jesus describes God’s kingdom as being like yeast in dough—that is, people of faith were never meant to be isolated as a community or as individuals, but to be actively contributing to society and working alongside others to bring change. Your faith community can contribute to broader cultural change by sharing the changes you have been making and finding other groups in the wider community who are interested in going on this journey too. You may find that there are people in the wider community who are like minded and are looking for others with similar values to work with, or you might also find that there are many in your community who rarely think about issues of sustainability but are open to learning and being transformed.

This could include engaging other faith communities in your area, talking to the schools, community centres and even the local council. Let others in your area know what you have done and inspire them to do likewise. Over time, you could work towards forming a network of environmentally conscious faith communities in your area.

With your sustainability team, discuss:

- » What connections does your faith community already have with the wider community that you could start with to engage in issues of environmental responsibility and raising awareness about climate change? Are there other groups in the community that are already environmentally active? Climate action groups? Permaculture groups? Landcare? Bush regeneration etc?
- » What are ideas that you have implemented with your faith community that you could broaden to invite the wider community to be involved with too?
- » Where are the places in the wider community where people gather? (community centres, community activities, local markets or festivals etc) Which of these groups might be interested in co-hosting an event or initiative with you in the community about these issues?
- » How could you get your congregation to think about their wider circles of influence as well—perhaps their workplaces, places of study, other groups they are connected to as well?
- » What other faith groups are nearby, and how can your congregation learn from their perspectives on caring for Creation or the ideas they are trying?

Brainstorm ideas about one initiative you could take as a faith community to engage with the wider community about sustainability and climate change. Ideas might include:

- » Hosting a local interfaith discussion about Caring for Creation, or a community event with a guest speaker on climate change. You could also hold a discussion forum about sustainability and make space for people to share what they are doing in the community.
- » Talking to others in the street where your church is located to start a Sustainability Street initiative or start a local initiative with the community that serves the community, eg a local Permaculture group/network that offers to help homes in the neighbourhood start edible gardens.
- » Organising a clothes swap, upcycling workshop, Clean Up Australia Day, tree planting or similar event that you could invite the wider community to, or a local collaborative consumption network.
- » Making your own YouTube video to share the journey of your faith community so far.

RESOURCES

- » *Host a community forum*
www.aclunc.org/action/activist_toolkit/hosting_a_community_forum.shtml
- » *Narrative workshop guide for talking to others about the issue*
www.tear.org.au/static/files/resources/advocacyInfo-NarrativeWorkshop.pdf

STEP 5: ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. **Proverbs 31:8–9***

*The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern. **Proverbs 29:7***

Addressing climate change not only requires us to make changes in our own lives and in our local communities, but to also examine the structural reasons as to why we are collectively locked into an environmentally damaging path. Campaigning for effective climate policies is therefore a key part of taking action on climate change. You can start with small steps like signing petitions and postcards, and as you gain confidence, learn how to effectively write letters to MPs, visit your MP and talk to them directly, or even organise your own campaign event, involving the wider community. There are many resources and organisations to help equip you. You don't need to be an expert to get involved in advocacy—the important thing for decision-makers like politicians to hear is that this is an issue that matters to you.

Structural change is a long and slow process—but every voice that speaks up counts and makes a difference in challenging what is unjust, even if we don't see results immediately. Advocacy about climate change is also about giving voice to those who do not have the opportunity to speak. The world's poorest people are those most affected by climate change, though they have contributed the least to its causes. This is a matter of injustice for people in developing countries, we have a responsibility to be “truth-tellers” about this fact. As well as advocating to decrease our contribution to climate change, we also need to advocate that poor communities are given the support they need (in the most appropriate forms) to be able to cope with the changes brought about by climate change. Part of our responsibility as people of faith is to hold our decision-makers to account about how the most vulnerable people are being protected.

ARRCC's policy positions paper focuses on two areas:

- » **Mitigation:** policies focused on slowing and reducing our contribution to climate change.
- » **Adaptation:** assisting the world's poorest to be able to adapt and cope with the impacts of climate change as a matter of justice.

With your team, read ARRCC's policy positions paper, then discuss the structures that your faith community is a part of that relate to these policies. You could include:

- » **Your own faith community and broader denominational structures:** Are there existing policies encouraging faith communities to be more sustainable and consider their environmental impact? Is your denominational structure using its collective voice to speak up about climate change?
- » **Local council:** Look into the environmental/climate change policies of your local council—are there goals to cut down the carbon emissions of your local area? Are they proactive in helping people in your local area live sustainably, for example, do they make it easy for people to recycle and compost their waste and take part in sustainable initiatives?
- » **State Government:** Where does your State Member of Parliament stand on climate change issues, and how could they be encouraged to represent your concerns in Parliament? For example, are there adequate public transport options in your local area to encourage people to be less reliant on cars?
- » **Federal Government:** Find out where your local MP and their party stands on climate change issues and Australia's support for poor countries affected by climate change.



STEP 5: ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

Help your community advocate:

- » Talk to your faith community about why structural change is needed to tackle climate change. You might like to show a short DVD clip or share a story about how climate change impacts the world's poorest people.
- » Educate your faith community about where Australia currently stands in its policy positions on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and ARRCC's policy recommendations.
- » Give your community a simple first step, like signing a petition, to get started in advocacy. (See TEAR's website on how to start a petition).
- » Get your community to write letters to your Members of Parliament as an act of worship (perhaps an offering) during a service or afterwards. You could provide a template and encourage people to add their own personal note about why they care and what they are doing in their own lives to become sustainable. Handwritten letters make the most impact, because they show that real effort has gone into them.
- » Take a small delegation to visit your MP to discuss your concerns, ARRCC's policy positions, find out where your MP stands, and see how you can work together.
- » Host a discussion forum inviting a local councillor, your State MP and federal MP to share where they stand on climate change issues and facilitate a discussion with participants about how civil society and Government can work together for sustainability at local, state, national and global levels. Ask these politicians to make a response to ARRCC's policy positions. At the forum you could share what your faith community has been doing to show their commitment to sustainability.

RESOURCES

- » *TEAR Australia's advocacy "how to" guides, including how to write a petition, visit politicians, research an issue and more*
www.tear.org.au/advocacy/issues/climate-justice
- » *Online petition platforms to start your own online campaign*
www.communityrun.org/ and www.change.org/en-AU
- » *UN Climate Trackers—online forum keeping you up to date on Australia's contribution through the UN to climate change mitigation and adaptation*
www.climateactiontracker.org/countries/australia.html

See the Tools for Advocacy section for more on how to get active in advocacy.

STEP 6: DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

The global fossil fuel divestment movement is the fastest growing divestment movement in history. An accelerating number of institutions and individuals are moving their money out of planet-heating fossil fuels and into climate solutions. Religious organisations can play a powerful role in moving Australia's economy out of fossil fuels and into clean energy.

Analysts have calculated how much more carbon humanity can afford to emit without overshooting the internationally accepted threshold of 2°C (*Unburnable Carbon 2013 report*, London). This is only one-fifth or so of current known oil, gas and coal reserves, yet the value of shares in mining companies is based on the assumption that all those reserves will be burnt. It is becoming increasingly well recognized that continuing to invest in these shares no longer meets a strong definition of "socially responsible". In Bill McKibben's now well-known words: "If it's wrong to wreck the planet, then it's wrong to profit from that wreckage."

Fossil fuel extraction companies have shown a lack of ethical integrity and transparency. The companies do not disclose the important systemic risks involved in fossil fuel reserves they hold which cannot safely be burnt. They continue to spend billions on further exploration and on unconventional fossil fuel extraction, eg, tar sands and coal seam gas which have even more dangerous environmental effects than conventional assets.

Finally, for decades the fossil fuel industry, including "Big Coal" in Australia, has funded climate denial think tanks and aggressively spread misinformation, for example, about "clean coal". Each year the industry routinely uses its considerable financial power to employ influential lobbyists to ensure legislation is passed which limits environmental action and maximizes its profits. At times, it mounts a public advertising campaign against such proposed legislation, usually with exaggerated claims of potential job losses. (See Guy Pearce, David McKnight & Bob Burton, *Big Coal*, UNSW, Sydney, 2013.)

Further resources on the moral case

- » For a more in-depth treatment of the moral argument for moving your money out of fossil fuels, see "Divest and Reinvest. Now." by Rev. Fletcher Harper of GreenFaith USA: greenfaith.org/programs/divest-and-reinvest/divest-and-reinvest.-now.-greenfaiths-overview
- » For a specifically Christian perspective on the moral argument, including biblical references, see the "Bright Now" report of Operation Noah in the UK.
- » See 350.org's inspirational film clip: act.350.org/signup/math-movie/

Religious organisations that have divested from fossil fuels

ARRCC as an organisation switched to BankMECU in mid-2012, but the first large religious organization to pass a resolution to Go Fossil Free in Australasia was the **NSW/ACT Synod of the Uniting Church** in April 2013. Similar resolutions have since been passed by numerous other religious organisations, large and small.

Altogether well over one hundred religious organisations have passed resolutions to divest from fossil fuels, mostly in the USA, Australia and New Zealand. Many have been in the United Church of Christ, Unitarian and Episcopalian traditions, eg, Massachusetts United Church of Christ. The first Catholic University to decide to begin divesting from fossil fuels is Dayton University in the US. Others Universities have followed.

Increasingly, religious organisations in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia are joining the list. They include:

- » the **Anglican General Synod of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Polynesia** and each of the Anglican Dioceses
- » Moetzah, the Council of Progressive Rabbis of Australia, New Zealand and Asia
- » **Sydney Buddhist Centre** (first Buddhist organisation globally)
- » Unitarian Church of South Australia

STEP 6: DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

- » [Society of Friends \(Quakers\) in Australia](#)
- » [Uniting Church in Australia Assembly](#)
- » [Anglican Diocese of Canberra-Goulburn](#)
- » [Anglican Diocese of Melbourne](#)
- » [Uniting Church Synod of Western Australia](#)
- » [Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa/New Zealand](#)
- » [four Australian Catholic religious orders](#) (and various other organisations since)

While these religious organisations are not large financially, their achievement is a moral one. They draw public attention to the immorality of the way fossil fuel industries pursue their profits and challenging their social license to operate.

Your faith community, place of worship, religious order, theological college or religious institution can join others taking a stand. People within your organization may express a variety of concerns. You will likely find that the paper prepared by those behind the Uniting Church decision address many of these concerns in their responses to objections raised: unitingearthweb.org.au/take-action/fossil-fuels/32-divestment-objections.html

Practicalities of divestment

It must be understood, we are not providing financial advice here. We are commenting on certain institutions on purely ethical grounds.

Many faith communities simply keep their money in a Bank. The Big Four banks, ANZ, Commonwealth, NAB and Westpac are the ones which invest most in fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure, whereas many of the smaller banks and credit unions have minimal exposure. If your organisation's money is in a conventional bank, especially one of the Big Four, you may wish to have a look at the Market Forces bank comparison list: www.marketforces.org.au/banks/compare and then various banks' credit ratings: www.relbanks.com/best-banks/australia

No bank is 100% fossil free but there are some which have minimal exposure to fossil fuels, such as Bendigo Bank, Bank Australia, Adelaide Bank, Newcastle Permanent, Victorian Teachers Mutual and Credit Union Australia and others on the Market Forces list.

To make your action more effective, remember to let your old institution know why you are moving your savings!

If your faith community or organisation is a small institutional investor, a phased approach is recommended, starting with the companies with most exposure to coal, oil and gas projects. The first step is to assess the level of exposure of various companies. The Australia Institute's full report, *Climate Proofing Your Investments*, categorises companies in tiers, from those with most exposure to those with least. The recommendation is to start by screening out investment in companies in tiers one and two in the first couple of years, and tiers three and four after that.

Divesting from fossil fuels is important in its own right, but there would be great benefit in also publicly announce such a move. Going public sends a message that industries which are causing environmental destruction should not enjoy the privileged place they have in society, thus challenging their social license to operate.

Reinvestment

Again, the following is not financial advice, but it's based on ethical considerations only. It is true to say that renewable energy companies in Australia have delivered high risk or low returns in recent years, because of an unstable regulatory environment. Internationally, however, renewable energy is generally lower risk. Also, re-investing responsibly could mean re-investing in a range of socially responsible options.

One possibility is to engage the services of an ethical investment firm which does screen out fossil fuels, such as Ethinvest, Australian Ethical or Ethical Investment Services in Melbourne.

Will this mean lower returns?

In a word, no. With the world's energy market in transition, already the results are showing up in returns for investors. The well-respected MSCI performance index demonstrates that investments excluding fossil fuels have produced **better returns** in recent years than those which have not. And yet, fund managers tend to hold on to the old ways.

If you'd like to see how much better off your organisation would have been if it had divested from fossil fuels three years ago, you can plug your equity portfolios into: www.decarbonizer.co

Advocacy

Divestment is not the only strategy available to achieve the desired goals. Religious institutional investors have been pre-disposed towards shareholder advocacy. The argument goes: While we remain shareholders or customers, our advocacy stands a much better chance of being successful. Shareholder advocacy is more in keeping with Christian ethics than divestment.

However, there is no evidence that even the most determined advocacy will deliver the changes needed in the required time frame, according to Divest Invest Philanthropy which has documented a raft of examples.

Some companies may be open to influence, such as banks, super funds and insurance companies, but fossil fuel companies themselves have not responded substantially to shareholder advocacy to date. In Australia, the Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility is attempting to engage in shareholder advocacy with regard to fossil fuel investment by the "Big Four" Banks and is looking for various forms of support.

Advocacy has its place but tactically through dis-investing we believe that we can more effectively send a message to the wider community about the dangers of continuing with fossil fuels.

RESOURCES

See ARRCC's resource here:

- » [Divest Invest Guide for Faith Based Organisations](#)—jointly published by The Climate Institute and ARRCC in December, 2016
- » GreenFaith's Divest and Reinvest Now! With comprehensive global listing of all known religious fossil fuel divestment decisions, the wording of resolutions, Interfaith Statement endorsing divestment, and so on: www.greenfaith.org/programs/divest-and-reinvest

For more information, the papers and videos from the Divest-Invest Conference held in Sydney in April, 2016, are all on the website: www.divestinvest.org.au/conference-resources/

STEP 6: DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

Divestment for individuals

Tell your financial institution/s that profiting from climate wreckage is morally unacceptable and financially risky. We have the opportunity to radically shift superannuation from the world's biggest fossil fuel investor to a climate change champion. To find out where your super is invested and how your fund is managing climate change risks, see www.superswitch.org.au/funds/.

If your money is with one of Australia's Big 4 banks, then you're investing in fossil fuel projects. Tell your bank to stop funding fossil fuel expansion and, if they take no action, commit to shifting to a better bank. For more about this visit: www.marketforces.org.au/campaigns/banks-new/.

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

The *Steps2Sustainability* are about an ongoing, lifelong journey for your faith community. It's not a linear process or a program with a finite end, but we hope you will continue to keep cycling through these steps, learning together and being transformed as a community and individually.

The benefits of living sustainably are endless, but the risks of not doing so include potentially catastrophic consequences, which are already beginning to be felt by the most vulnerable across the globe. We hope that it will become the natural way of life for your faith community to integrate thinking about sustainability in all your decisions collectively and individually. We also hope that you will find your relationships with the earth, each other and God revitalised and enriched along the way. The future of our planet and future generations depends on this renewed way of living—but so does the spiritual, physical and environmental health of our current generation. We're sure the journey will be a rich one for you as you get into the different aspects of sustainability, and we look forward to hearing from you about it along the way.



2 

Tools for learning

TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO HELP INFORM YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY ABOUT THE SCIENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, THINK THROUGH WHY WE ALL HAVE A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT, AND UNDERSTAND THE KEY AREAS OF RELEVANT PUBLIC POLICY



ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE: THE SCIENCE

What is the 'greenhouse effect'?

In the 1890s, a Swedish scientist named Svante Arrhenius identified the natural greenhouse effect of atmospheric carbon dioxide and water vapour in the earth's atmosphere, enabling an average surface temperature of 15°C. Without this effect, the earth would be a very chilly -18°C. Arrhenius suggested that fossil fuel combustion might eventually increase CO₂ concentrations and lead to temperature rise.

The 'greenhouse effect' arises because gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and water vapour in the atmosphere trap some of the radiation from the sun, preventing it from radiating back into space. This warms the atmosphere and the surface of the planet.

After the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, the world's deposits of carbon-intense coal, oil and gas began to be burned, thus returning additional CO₂ to the atmosphere. Since the early 20th century, dramatic increases in the world's population and in further industrialization have led to increased levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere.

Research into ancient air bubbles trapped in ice tells us that levels of CO₂ are higher than they have been at any time in the past 400,000 years. During the ice ages, CO₂ levels were around 200 parts per million (ppm), and during the warmer interglacial periods, they hovered around 280 ppm. The last time CO₂ levels were this high, humans did not exist.

The other important greenhouse gases are methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O). These are more potent than CO₂ in their greenhouse impact. Methane is primarily produced from agricultural activities, especially animal grazing and fossil fuel use, and nitrous oxide is produced from agricultural activities. Atmospheric concentrations of these greenhouse gases are now far exceeding the natural range experienced over the last 650,000 years. Scientists anticipate that, as the planet warms, the permafrost (ground that has been permanently frozen) in Arctic regions will release large quantities of methane as it thaws. This is already beginning to happen.

Advancing the science

Much more progress was made in this field of research during the 1980s, when the global annual mean temperature started to rise. In 1988, the United Nations established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a scientific body tasked with reviewing and assessing the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide related to climate change.

Almost every major university and scientific institution around the world is undertaking research in at least one aspect of the changing climate and contributing to our overall understanding.

Over the last 20 odd years, the IPCC has produced a number of assessment reports that provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of climate change, its likely trajectory, and its potential environmental and socio-economic consequences. The comprehensive information in the IPCC reports is based on peer-reviewed, published scientific evidence from relevant experts from around the world. Each new assessment report reflects a progressive strengthening of our understanding of climate change.

In 2013, the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report concluded that warming of both the ocean and the atmosphere is 'unequivocal' with multiple lines of evidence showing that the earth's average surface temperature rose 0.78°C in the period from 1850 to 2012.

Scientific observations from NASA and the IPCC

- » At the time of writing, 2015 was the warmest year on record for the globe since reliable global surface air temperature records began in 1880. The previous 15 years were among the 16 warmest years on record.
- » Globally-averaged ocean temperatures are increasing. Observations reveal this warming extends to at least 2000m below the surface.
- » Globally-averaged sea level has risen over 20 cm since the late 19th century, with about one third of this rise due to ocean warming and the rest from melting land ice and changes in the amount of water stored on the land.
- » The Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have been losing mass in the last two decades and Arctic sea ice has continued to decrease in extent.

The human-induced activities of fossil fuel burning and agriculture, are responsible for about 98% of the global warming effect. Natural changes in solar activity and volcanic aerosols have made only a small contribution to the global warming effect, except for brief periods after large volcanic eruptions.

How Australia's climate is changing

The latest CSIRO/Bureau of Meteorology report, State of the Climate 2016, noted the following observed changes:

- » Australia's climate has warmed in both mean surface air temperature and surrounding sea surface temperature by around 1°C since 1910.
- » The duration, frequency and intensity of extreme heat events have increased across large parts of Australia, with concomitant increases in vulnerability to fire.
- » May–July rainfall has reduced by around 19 per cent since 1970 in the southwest of Australia.
- » There has been a decline of around 11 per cent since the mid-1990s in the April–October growing season rainfall in the continental southeast.
- » Rainfall has increased across parts of northern Australia since the 1970s.

Impacts of a warming climate

- » Glaciers everywhere are melting and disappearing fast, threatening the primary source of clean water for millions of people.
- » If emissions continue to track at the top of IPCC scenarios global average sea level could rise by nearly 1m by 2100. Sea level rise will continue for centuries to thousands of years even after greenhouse gas concentrations are stabilised due to the long lag times involved in warming of the oceans and the response of ice sheets.
- » Eventually, the sea level is expected to rise around 2.3m for every degree (°C) that climate change warms the planet, and Earth has warmed by over 1°C already. What scientists don't know is how long it will take. Given that most of the world's population and infrastructure are sited close to sea-level, the implications are serious.
- » The oceans are becoming more acidic because of the CO₂ they are absorbing, which makes it harder for animals like corals and clams to build their shells and exoskeletons. Together with the warming of the water, these two factors have led to the massive coral bleaching seen along the Great Barrier Reef.
- » A warmer atmosphere absorbs more water vapour and contains more energy, which leads to larger and more extreme weather events, both hot and cold. All around the world, extreme weather events (such as cyclones, typhoons, blizzards, droughts and heatwaves) are happening more frequently and/or with greater intensity.
- » The destabilized climate is making it harder to grow food in many areas.
- » Mosquitoes, which thrive in warmer temperatures, are spreading into new places, and bringing malaria and dengue fever with them.



TOOLS FOR LEARNING

- » Many species of animals are finding it impossible to adapt to the changing environments where they live. Extinctions are on the rise, and the biodiversity of regions is threatened.
- » Taken together, extreme weather, changes in water supplies and reductions in food production capacity are likely to result in greater tensions between communities in many regions, especially in regions that are already strapped for resources. Climate change is understood as a “threat multiplier”.

How much warmer?

As discussed, 1°C warming has already been observed, and it is likely that another 0.5–1°C is already locked in as a result of the emissions already in the atmosphere and the warming in the oceans. The fact that the greenhouse gases have already passed 400ppm, and are still rising, has led scientists to conclude we are already above the safe zone, and that unless we are able to rapidly return to below 350 ppm this century, we risk at least a 2°C temperature rise, and quite possibly a 4°C average warming by the year 2100.

Many parts of the world would become uninhabitable under that scenario. Many are now rightly describing the situation as a “climate emergency”.

RESOURCES

- » Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO, *State of the Climate 2016*
www.csiro.au/state-of-the-climate
- » Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
www.ipcc.ch
- » Climate Council
www.climatecouncil.org.au/
- » Real Climate—*climate science from working climate scientists*
www.realclimate.org
- » Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
www.ocean.si.edu/sea-level-rise
- » The Climate Institute’s Carbon 101
www.climateinstitute.org.au/carbon-101.html/section/458
- » United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
www.unfccc.int
- » United Nations climate change portal
www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change-2/

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Thank you to ARRCC members, Catherine and David Rossiter, who provided the above material.

ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE: THE MORALITY

Climate change is not just a scientific issue—it is also a moral one. Scientists may be examining how human activity is changing the earth’s climate and ecosystems. However, harm to Creation (both human and non-human), who or what benefits from such harm, and our part in the causes and solutions are deeply moral matters. In addition to climate change, this also includes other harms associated with the sources of greenhouse gas emissions—such as the direct impacts of fossil fuel mining on water, human health and biodiversity.

ARRCC believes that climate change is a moral issue for the following three reasons:

1. While the potentially detrimental outcomes of climate change most severely impact the poor, it is the prosperous who most significantly contribute to the cause through a more significant carbon footprint.
2. Outcomes that arise from choices in the present reduce choices for future generations.
3. How human beings relate to the rest of the created order bears testimony to the inner integrity of humanity itself.

Impacts on people

The melting of polar ice means that low-lying land such as atolls in the Pacific (e.g. Kiribati, Tuvalu) and delta areas (e.g. in Bangladesh) are being inundated by rising sea levels, causing coastal erosion and salination of fresh water supplies and increased soil salinity leading to failure of crops. The threats to livelihoods, lives, and even nationhood, is being raised by Christians and churches in fora such as the Pacific Conference of Churches and the World Council of Churches.

In other parts of the world, increased droughts and changing rainfall make it very hard for farmers to know when to plant and when to harvest their crops, as both wet and dry weather is required at different times in the planting cycle to ensure a good crop. Further, the changing temperatures also affect the ability of crops to survive and thrive, particularly those that are only suited to either warm or cold climates. This not only affects poorer farmers ability to earn a living, but for subsistence farmers affects their very ability to feed themselves.

The changing rainfall patterns, shrinking glaciers and the effects of these on river systems, also affect the abilities of communities to maintain a supply of fresh drinking water. This is a particular issue in Australia as well as around the world. However in poorer countries the effects of lack of fresh water sources are often much greater as alternatives are not readily available or affordable. This leads to large increases in health problems, whether caused by dehydration and heat stroke, or by water-borne diseases and illnesses such as diarrhoea, which is the greatest killer of children under 5 in the world.

Other health problems also arise from the general increasing temperatures which is causing a spread of the tropical zones further out from the equator. Also associated with warming is increased spread in tropical diseases into communities that have previously had no exposure to the disease and therefore no immunity. Malaria particularly is an example of this.

Other social problems arise from the decrease in arable land and particularly the supply of fresh water, both of which see large numbers of people moving away from their homelands in search of better livelihoods elsewhere. This may result in a large rural-urban migration as people descend on already highly populated cities, great internal displacement as people are forced to move between different regions within a country, or even international migration as people cross borders into other countries. In addition to the tensions and unrest this can cause, fighting can also break out over the control of precious resources.

People as the cause and the solution

The science is clear that people have been the cause of the climate change challenges we are seeing today and into the future. People in developed countries have contributed the most to climate change, while the people in developing countries, who have contributed the least, suffer the greatest consequences of climate change.

A just response in this situation requires not only for the global community, and especially developed countries, to do everything we can to mitigate climate change and help poor countries adapt, but we also need to take a long hard look at the root of the issue. The system of ever-increasing consumption in developed countries is simply not sustainable for our planet, and until we can acknowledge this and change our way of thinking and living, we will continue on the same destructive path. We need to fundamentally change our relationship with the earth, from one of exploitation and consumption to a relationship of respect, care, protection and stewardship.

When we take action to reduce our consumption it will help mitigate some of the above impacts by reducing climate change, but it can also have direct beneficial impacts on poor communities. For example, when we choose to eat less meat, reducing the demand, then not only will methane emissions from livestock be reduced, but the cereals and grains which are used to feed these livestock will no longer be diverted from feeding poor communities struggling with food security. Taking action for climate change can have immediate impacts, as well as longer term impacts on poor communities.

RESOURCES

- » *ABC Religion and Ethics article "Faith must confront climate change with a single moral voice"*
www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2012/07/13/3545416.htm
- » *Article: "NASA scientist: climate change is a moral issue on a par with slavery"*
www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/apr/06/nasa-scientist-climate-change
- » *UN Videos on the human cost of climate change*
www.oxfam.org.au/what-we-do/food-and-climate/what-you-can-do-2/sisters-on-the-planet/
- » *World Vision's resources on Climate Change and poverty*
www.worldvision.com.au/issues/Climate_Change.aspx
- » *Caritas' Our Common Home: Calling for climate justice*
www.caritas.org.au/act/our-common-home
- » *Oxfam videos on the Faces of Climate Change*
www.oxfam.org.au/explore/climate-change/what-oxfam-is-doing/faces-of-climate-change
- » *Prudence, Poverty, the Common Good, and Solidarity—Catholic teaching on climate change*
www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/

ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE: PUBLIC POLICY

ARRCC believes that an effective response to climate change needs to be communal as well as individual, as societal structures that promote unsustainable consumption need to be regulated and economies need to be redirected away from the pursuit of unlimited economic “growth” and towards new understandings of prosperity.

The following is a summary of ARRCC’s public policy positions:

In the area of climate change, ARRCC holds that the following are the policies which best reflect the values held dear by people of various religious traditions: compassion, human fulfilment, justice, truth-telling and respect for life.

...A moral collective response to climate change will involve the urgent scaling up of energy generation from renewable sources and the phasing out of coal, both as an export and a fuel source. It will involve the elimination of counter-productive subsidies for carbon-intensive industries. These should be replaced with investment in renewable energy and incentives to pursue a low carbon future, including carbon pricing.

ARRCC also advocates for a range of measures such as instituting stronger mandatory energy efficiency standards, encouraging Australians to reduce their meat intake and ending the logging of old growth forests. Those with vested interests will insist these kinds of measures will be economically disastrous. On the contrary, they have potential to create new employment opportunities and ultimately protect the ecosystems on which life itself depends.

In international negotiations, Australia should set a much higher emissions reduction target and renewable energy target, and advocate for a binding agreement to keep global warming at no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. As the OECD nation with the highest per capita emissions and a country with the capacity to change, we have a moral obligation to do so.

We should also provide considerable financial assistance to developing countries to help them adapt to climate change, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of justice. The assistance we offer should be in the order of billions of dollars annually, and it should be in addition to existing overseas development assistance. It should be administered through partnerships which give credit to the local knowledge and resilience of people in developing countries. Australia should furthermore advocate for other ways of increasing the capacity of developing countries to adapt, such as the creation of innovative financing mechanisms and the cancellation of odious international debts.

For the full Public Policy Positions document, see www.arrcc.org.au/policy-positions

RESOURCES

- » *Oxfam Australia: Reports and resources*
www.oxfam.org.au/what-we-do/food-and-climate/reports-and-resources/
- » *Doing further research—TEAR Australia’s guide on how to research an issue*
www.tear.org.au/resources/advocacy-guide-how-to-research-an-issue/



3 

Tools for reflection

TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO HELP YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY REFLECT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND CREATION AND THE CONNECTION TO THEIR FAITH, INCLUDING STATEMENTS BY FAITH LEADERS, PRAYERS AND SERMONS



YOUR RELIGION: STATEMENTS BY FAITH LEADERS

There are many statements by Church leaders that articulate Christian theologies around caring for Creation, many of which are poignant but not well known, even among the most dedicated believers. Below are just a few examples.

Australian statements

» **The Uniting Church in Australia, *Investment in Fossil Fuels*, 16 October, 2014:**

Noting that “the amount of carbon in listed reserves owned by the global top 200 fossil fuel companies is five times greater than can be emitted while limiting climate change to two degrees” the Uniting Church recognised “that further investment in the extraction of fossil fuels contributes to and makes it more difficult to address climate change, and on the basis of the harm this will cause, further investment and extraction is unethical.”

www.unitingjustice.org.au/environment/uca-statements/item/973-investment-in-fossil-fuels

» **Joint statement by Archbishop Philip Freier, the Anglican Primate of Australia, and Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, the Primate of South Africa: *The Moral Imperative of Climate Action*:**

All too often, the effects of [Climate Change] are most acutely felt by vulnerable populations, who have done the least to contribute to climate change. Australia’s Pacific neighbours are already badly affected with Kiribati recently asking that its people be moved to Fiji to escape rising sea levels. God commanded us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. These are our neighbours, and we quite simply must stand with them. Indeed, we have the capability—and an ethical obligation—to put an end to this vicious and unjust cycle of climate injustice.

www.theage.com.au/comment/the-moral-imperative-of-climate-action-20150710-gi9hhd

Other statements

» ***Climate Change: Our Responsibility to Sustain God’s Earth A Position Paper from Catholic Earthcare Australia*** endorsed by the Bishops’ Committee for Justice, Development, Ecology and Peace.

catholicearthcare.org.au/project/climate-change-responsibility-sustain-gods-earth/

» **Uniting Church in Australia: *Resolutions, position papers and resources on environmental justice and energy*** www.unitingjustice.org.au/environment

» **Quaker Earthcare statement:** www.quakersaustralia.info/?page=298

» **Salvation Army Positional statement on the Environment:**

www.salvationarmy.org.au/en/Who-We-Are/vision-and-mission/Positional-Statements/Positional-Statements/ENVIRONMENT/

International statements

» **Encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*, released 18-6-2015**

w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

The encyclical strongly encourages a change of heart in everyone, at all levels of society and globally, to relinquish any narrow focus on immediate self-interest. It encourages an “integral ecology”, an approach to living which holds together our deep spiritual needs, relationships with others (especially the poor), connection with nature and love of God.

Para. 26. “There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. Worldwide there is minimal access to clean and renewable energy.”



TOOLS FOR REFLECTION

Para. 161. “Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony and disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet’s capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences.”

Para. 165. “We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels—especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas—has to be progressively replaced without delay.”

- » **National Association of Evangelicals (US): *Caring for God’s Creation—A Call to Action* (20 October, 2015)**
www.nae.net/nae-issues-call-to-action-on-creation-care/

“In solidarity with evangelical leaders from around the world, we endorse the creation care principles outlined in the Lausanne Cape Town Commitment, which states: All human beings are to be stewards of the rich abundance of God’s good creation...”

We lament over the widespread abuse and destruction of the earth’s resources, including its bio-diversity. Probably the most serious and urgent challenge faced by the physical world now is the threat of climate change. This will disproportionately affect those in poorer countries, for it is there that climate extremes will be most severe and where there is little capability to adapt to them. World poverty and climate change need to be addressed together and with equal urgency.”

- » **World Council of Churches statement on climate justice (25 November, 2016)**

The WCC executive committee:

“Reiterates the urgent concerns of churches around the world in relation to climate change and its adverse effects on the whole of creation, especially on vulnerable poor and indigenous communities, the irreversible ecological degradation and loss of biodiversity, the increased risk of social and political tensions, conflict and displacement in a climate-constrained world, and the moral imperative of fossil fuel divestment and of investing in a low-carbon path to realizing economic, social and ecological wellbeing and sustainability for the whole creation ...

Calls on all states to fulfil the commitments of the Paris Agreement, through local, national and international action and cooperation, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to stop deforestation, to ensure that the global temperature rise does not exceed 2°C (striving for the lower target of 1.5°C), and to increase investment in renewable energy technologies in order to achieve the target of 100% renewable energy by 2050.

Calls especially on rich industrialized countries to scale up support (including through technology transfer) and to fulfill the commitment to mobilize \$100 billion per year for climate change mitigation and adaptation from 2020.”

Statements are also available from:

Anglican Communion Environment Network has numerous statements and resources
acen.anglicancommunion.org/#sthash.DxSNI4x8.dpbs

World Council of Churches: Documents on climate change, starting from the most recent speeches, prayers and statements.

www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/diakonia/climate-change

YOUR RELIGION: PRAYERS

Prayer takes many different forms, and is a vital way that we express our faith. It can take the form of meditation, individual or communal prayer, responsive prayers, interacting with Creation, silent or spoken out loud, using words, images or music—or any way that you find helpful to connect with God.

Prayer is a way that we can become more aware of Creation and the Creator, reflect on the goodness of Creation, while also acknowledging our part in its brokenness. Through prayer we can recommit ourselves to the original task we were given of caring for Creation, and remember the poor who are most affected by climate change. It is about creating the space of silence and stillness to allow ourselves to listen and be transformed.

Below are a few examples of prayers from different Christian traditions that you might find helpful to use with your faith community—if you feel inspired to write your own prayers, go for it!

The Be-Attitudes

*Adapted from John Polhill, © Eggs and Ashes,
(Used with permission)*

Blessed are those who use low energy light bulbs
for theirs is the light of God's wisdom.

Blessed are those who travel by train (and other public transport)
for their lives are on God's track.

Blessed are those who chose a car with low fuel consumption
for they are in God's fast lane.

Blessed are those who insulate their homes
for theirs is the warmth of God's love.

Blessed are those who put themselves out
to use energy from renewable sources,
for they have kindled the flame of the future.

A Prayer for Operation Noah

Eleanor Todd, European Christian Network

Jesus Christ, tempted to turn stones to bread in the wilderness;

Teach us that when we change time for our convenience;
night to day in our living,
patience to speed in our journeying,
winter to summer in our eating,

we change God's calendar, which brings
the hatchling to the caterpillar,
the bee to the nectar,
the rains to the farmer;
the one which brings you to the cross.

Give us grace in our simplest actions to choose the life
which breathes in the beautiful complexity of creation,
to conquer death, and to fit us to be Easter people.

Amen.



TOOLS FOR REFLECTION

Prayer for Creation (Responsive prayer)

Micah Challenge Australia for the 2009 StandUp kit for Churches

Leader:

Creator God, We thank you for the beauty of your Creation, and for giving us the privilege of caring for it. We confess that we have not cared for the earth with the self-sacrificing and nurturing love that you require of us. We mourn the broken relationships in creation. We repent for our part in causing the current environmental crisis that has led to climate change.

Congregation:

Faithful God, sustainer of all—we pray with hope, because you are already at work through Christ to reconcile all of creation to Yourself and to renew all things.

Leader:

Loving God, help us to turn our lives around to be people of restoration. Help us build just relationships among human beings and with the rest of creation. Help us to live sustainably, rejecting consumerism and the exploitation of creation.

Congregation:

God of justice, give us courage and persistence to work for justice for those most affected by environmental degradation and climate change.

Leader:

God of mercy, hear the cry of the poor who are already suffering and will continue to suffer water and food shortages and who will be displaced by climate change.

Congregation:

God of all wisdom, give wisdom to the leaders of all the world's nations to work to implement the Paris Agreement to tackle climate change. Give them the determination to find a just solution that protects the people who are most vulnerable in our world, and protects creation.

Leader:

Creator God, give us your Spirit to work together to restore your creation and to hand on a safe environment and climate to our children and theirs. Let our care for creation be our act of worship and obedience to you. Your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

All:

Amen.

A Confession

Lent Challenge 2008, Lichfield Diocese

God our Creator and Healer

We confess that we have sinned:

We have used creation not cherished it;

We have lived selfishly; not watched the balance of life;

We have been greedy—not sharing earth's gifts;

And our footprints are heavy not gentle.

Forgive us the damage that disturbs our planet.

Grant to us to live for the world's healing and our own.

In you lies our hope for transformation.

Amen.

INTERACTIVE PRAYERS

These prayers require some preparation beforehand to gather materials and set up the space. These interactive prayers invite people to pray in a tactile way beyond just using words, engaging all their senses, while being aware of their physical connection to creation. Although it is a little more effort to organise and explain, it can be a powerful holistic experience of prayer for people.

1. “In him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth... all things are held together by him.” Colossians 1:16–17

Invite people to walk outside, find a fallen leaf or seed and bring it back to the group. Spend some time looking at the detail of the object you have chosen. Consider its intricacy, how long it has lived, the ways it has grown and changed, the plant it came from—and how it will now contribute to new life as mulch or a new plant. Consider how each part of God’s creation, including ourselves, are a reflection in some way of God’s, character, nature, power, humility, complexity, creativity and love.

Trace the shape of the leaf or seed on your piece of paper. Write down next to it your favourite place in Creation where you connect with God. Quietly give thanks for God’s good creation. If there are any marks of human impact on God’s creation around you here, take the time to notice these and acknowledge them, whether good or bad. You might like to share your reflection with someone else in the group.

2. “Take off your sandals, for where you are standing is holy ground.” Exodus 3:5

Draw an outline of a large map of Australia and of the world for the group and provide pens. Invite people to take off their shoes to remind us that God’s creation is holy and God’s original intention was for us to relate with God in creation. Walk around outside and be conscious of the feel of the ground under your feet and meditate on the footprint we each leave on this world. Come back inside and trace your shoe’s footprint inside the map of Australia to acknowledge our own contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Write inside your footprint the forms of transport you used to get here today. This is not to induce guilt on you, but to help us acknowledge the context we live in and our contribution to it.

Spend a minute reflecting on how we are connected to other countries through a shared atmosphere. Spend some time being aware of the fact that some countries—particularly Australia—pollute the atmosphere with more than their fair share of carbon emissions. Invite people to put their shoes back on together as a communal act of repentance and commitment to treading on the earth more lightly.

3. “And God saw everything he had made, and indeed it was very good... The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden to till and to look after it” Genesis 2:15

Provide planter boxes or egg cartons, soil and seeds. Invite people to place some soil in the planter boxes or a cup and plant a seed in it. As you handle the soil and the seeds, reflect on the original task given to us to take care of God’s creation. Reflect on how our relationship and the way we care for creation impacts our relationship with God, and how we have strayed from this task and instead have exploited creation. Reflect on what things in your life have distracted you from the task of caring for creation? Collect some water and water the seeds you have planted and give thanks for the interrelationships between us, Creation and God.

RESOURCES

- » *Monthly Ecology Prayer Guide*
www.greenchristian.org.uk/faith/prayer-guide
- » *Caritas Australia—a Just Climate Prayer*
www.caritas.org.au/docs/campaigns/a-just-climate-prayer.pdf?sfvrsn=4

TOOLS FOR REFLECTION

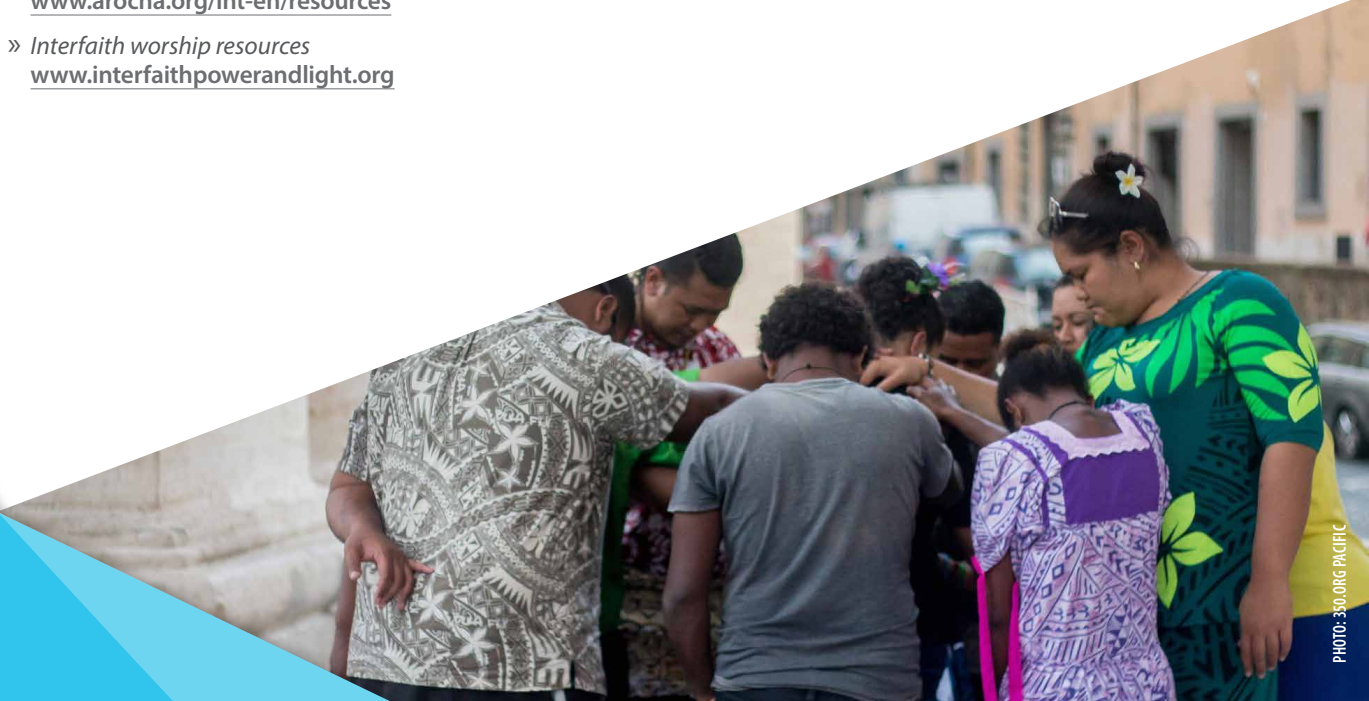
YOUR RELIGION: SERMONS/PREACHING/HOMILIES

If action on climate change is an integral part of responding to the Gospel message today, this needs to be reflected in the liturgical life of the Church.

The sermon or homily is potentially especially important for inspiring believers to become actively engaged, by helping people understand what the Bible teaches us about Creation, our relationship to it, and how this is interrelated with our connection to God. When people understand the biblical basis for caring for Creation, it can give them a framework to hang their understanding of God's world on. There are many sample sermons/homilies available online that you or your church leader can use directly, or as a starting point.

RESOURCES

- » *Christian Ecology Link's Green Pointers for Preachers*
www.greenchristian.org.uk/faith/lectionary#index
 - » *Sermons from Uniting Justice*
www.unitingjustice.org.au
- General theological resources:**
- » National Council of Churches' Eco-Mission Project
www.ncca.org.au/departments/eco-mission
 - » *TEAR Australia's Carbon Fast (40 day program for small groups)*
www.tear.org.au/resources/carbon-fast
 - » *Baptist World Aid Australia's End of Greed (5 part study series for small groups)*
www.baptistworldaid.org.au/get-involved/be-open/the-end-of-greed-2/
 - » *Catholic Earthcare resources*
www.catholicearthcare.org.au/resources/
 - » *Uniting Earthweb ecotheology resources*
www.unitingearthweb.org.au/take-action.html
 - » *Ecofaith worship resources*
www.ecofaith.org/worship/index.html
 - » *A Rocha (Christian environmental organisation) audio, video and church resources*
www.arocha.org/int-en/resources
 - » *Interfaith worship resources*
www.interfaithpowerandlight.org



4 

Tools for action

EACH OF STEPS2SUSTAINABILITY SUGGESTS A NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES TO GET YOU STARTED TAKING ACTION. THE FOLLOWING IS A 'LIBRARY' OF RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO KEEP YOU GOING—REMEMBER THESE ARE JUST A START, AND THE SKY IS THE LIMIT HOW FAR YOU WANT YOUR IMPACT TO REACH IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY AND HOW CREATIVE YOU WANT TO BE



TOOLS FOR ACTION

RESOURCES FROM ARRCC

The ARRCC website provides a number of tools help you and your church take practical action together.

- » **Going “green” for parishes**
Tips on making large and small carbon savings as a faith community
www.arrcc.org.au/inform_your_faith_community
- » **Going “green” for householders**
Tips on going green as an individual or household
www.arrcc.org.au/resources_for_individual_lifestyle_choices
- » **Meat Free Day campaign**
Resources on how and why to introduce a Meat Free Day into your faith community
www.arrcc.org.au/eat-less-meat
- » **Walk or Ride to Worship campaign**
Resources on how to run a Ride to Worship day in your faith community
www.arrcc.org.au/walk_or_ride_to-worship
- » **Celebrating lightly**
Ideas on how to lower the ecological footprint of celebrations in your faith community
www.arrcc.org.au/celebrate_lightly
- » **Repower Worship**
An introduction to energy efficiency and renewable energy for your place of worship
www.arrcc.org.au/repower-worship
- » **GreenPower Fact Sheet**
Tips for switching your place of worship to Green Power
www.arrcc.org.au/new_greenpowerfactsheet

MORE RESOURCES

- » *Collaborative consumption websites for ideas and networks to share appliances and resources:*
www.greenvillages.com.au/green-tips/our-top-collaborative-consumption-sites and
www.collaborativeconsumption.com/index.php
- » *Carbon Footprint calculator to measure your own impact*
www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx
- » *Green Tips for your household from the City of Sydney Council*
www.greenvillages.com.au/category/green-tips/
- » *Accessing locally grown food:*
 - *Local Farmers Markets directory*
www.farmersmarkets.org.au/markets
 - *Food Connect*
www.foodconnect.com.au
 - *Harvest Hub*
www.harvesthub.com.au
 - *Aussie Farmers Direct*
www.aussiefarmers.com.au
- » *Find out about grants you could access for your faith community to become more sustainable: Grants and rebates for communities*
www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/grant_main.jsp
www.climatechange.gov.au/government/programs-and-rebates.aspx
- » *Check your local council for Green Matching Grants for the community, eg*
www.greenvillages.com.au/?s=grant
- » *Permablitz—how to get people together to set up a food garden at one person’s home in a day*
www.permablitz.net
- » *Australian City Farms and Community Garden Network*
www.communitygarden.org.au
- » *How to start and manage a community garden*
www.greenvillages.com.au/?category_name=green-tips&tag=community-gardens
- » *Sustainability Street—how to get your street working together to become more sustainable*
www.sustainabilitystreet.org.au/



5 

Tools for advocacy

ADVOCACY IS ABOUT BEING INVOLVED IN CREATING SOCIAL CHANGE, AND CAN RANGE FROM STARTING WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS TO CHANGE OUR PRACTICES, TO CHALLENGING UNJUST STRUCTURES AND POLICIES LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND GLOBALLY



SPEAK OUT: INTRODUCTION

Advocacy is about being involved in creating social change. It is about challenging cultures and structures that perpetuate injustice and an unsustainable pathway. Doing advocacy means being active citizens, and taking up our part in holding decision makers to account to ensure the policies and structures at all levels of our society consider the impact on the earth.

As Christians, part of our Mission is to help build the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in heaven. While we do this through the way we live, as a Church we are also called to engage in the process of social change, which is political in the broad sense. This is a profoundly moral engagement.

The first and most important step in becoming involved is to educate ourselves on the issues. Rely on sources which reflect the consensus among reputable climate scientists and/or are informed by Christian values. See the section on science of climate change for specific recommendations.

There are many resources available to equip you to get involved in advocacy, from how to talk to your friends and family, through to challenging unjust structures at a local and global level.

SPEAK OUT: TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Advocacy begins with the conversations we have every day with the people around us. We don't all have to be experts on climate science to be able to speak up—it can start with simply sharing that climate change is something we see as being important to act on, and sharing some of the reasons and motivations behind some of the lifestyle changes you are making.

We can point people to the reports by reputable climate scientists. However, the area that is probably furthest from people's awareness, is how climate change is impacting the world's poorest the most, though they have contributed the least to the causes—and it is already affecting their water supplies and crop cycles. It is important that we share stories about these communities—because our communities are connected to theirs, and our actions have real implications for their lives.

RESOURCES

- » *TEAR Australia's guide to telling our own story on climate change:*
www.tear.org.au/static/files/resources/advocacyInfo-NarrativeWorkshop.pdf
- » *Tips from Communications expert George Marshall*
www.desmog.uk/2016/05/11/george-marshall-interview-engaging-conservatives-on-climate-change



SPEAK OUT: IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

You may find that there are people in your local community already passionate and active about sustainability, and getting together with them to take action can help build the momentum needed to change the culture, practices and policies in your neighbourhood. There may be existing initiatives you can join and support, or events that you can host or co-host to get the conversation and action happening.

Ideas of outreaching to other communities, whether they are local or global:

- » Let other communities know what you are doing to care for Creation, through the internet, personal contact or through faith-based or local media.
- » Hold a film night and invite congregants from other local churches.
- » Hold a public forum on climate change, with guest speakers, including your local MP.
- » Get your church involved with a community event.
- » Get your church involved in a faith-based network which is working on environmental issues. In addition to ARRCC, the Pacific Calling Partnership, Common Grace, Faith Ecology Network, World Vision, Caritas, World Vision, TEAR Australia and others are actively engaged. Many denominations also have their own groups or networks active in this area.
- » Promote and champion a “climate change response” in the broader community.
- » You could include fundraising for projects assisting poor communities affected by climate change.

RESOURCES

- » *A wide range of excellent resources for community groups can be found at:*
www.thechangeagency.org/

SPEAK OUT: TO YOUR LOCAL MP

This is one of the most effective ways available to attempt to influence policy. When a voter in an electorate visits their MP, they are understood to represent the views of many others who feel the same way but haven’t organised themselves to actually visit. Personal contact gives a human face to a viewpoint and is usually more powerful than a letter.

Be polite and respectful, but don’t be side-tracked. Be familiar with the arguments and what is being called for by like-minded people. Your message would be different, depending on which party your MP belongs to. Be clear on your message and what you are asking the MP to do. For contact details of the MP for your area, look up the Australian Electoral Commission website: www.aec.gov.au.

Be creative in your engagement with your MP. MPs are bombarded with reports and words, so perhaps you could take them something tangible like a pot of herbs to keep in their office to remind them of what you have asked them to do, or something that has been signed by members of your church to show the level of support for the issue. You could invite them to take part in a community event where they speak about their perspective on the issue, or take part in a practical green activity with you.

RESOURCES

- » *ARRCC’s Politician letter guide*
www.arrcc.org.au/write_to_your_politician



TOOLS FOR REFLECTION

SPEAK OUT: TO A PROBLEM CORPORATE ENTITY

Campaigning organisations like ARRCC, 350.org, Lock the Gate, Market Forces, Greenpeace and others are often targeting corporate entities that are acting against the common good. It may be an Oil Giant wanting to drill in the Great Australian Bight; it may be a Big Bank which is funding new fossil fuel mining projects; it may be an energy company which is keeping old coal-powered energy generators going; it may be a company which is providing services for a destructive mining project. Corporations are generally protective of their public reputation, so sensitive to public criticism. Public pressure has resulted in hundreds of wins for the environment.

Campaigning organisations can usually only be effective if they can mobilise broad public support. They provide interesting films, training, support to enable local groups to speak out. It can be most enriching for your volunteers to receive training in being effective change agents on issues they care about. By getting behind existing campaigns, your locally based group can celebrate victories from time to time. Along the way your group can build skills, friendships and confidence. And you can make a difference.

ADVOCACY RESOURCES:

- » *Local media contacts*
www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1423
- » *Writing an effective media release*
www.tear.org.au/resources/working-with-the-media-guide and
www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1575
- » *The Change Agency's campaign planning resources*
www.thechangeagency.org/page/1/?s=planning+a+campaign
- » *TEAR Australia's advocacy "how to" guides, including how to write a petition, visit politicians, research an issue and more*
www.tear.org.au/advocacy/issues/climate-justice
- » *Our Community's Community Advocacy Centre resources*
www.ourcommunity.com.au/advocacy/advocacy_main.jsp
- » *Online petition platforms to start your own online campaign*
www.communityrun.org/ and www.change.org/en-AU

SPEAK OUT: IN THE FORM OF PEACEFUL PROTEST

Peaceful protest is widely recognised in robust democracies as one form of action available to citizens whereby they can take a stand against unjust laws and wealthy corporations. Protest can take the form of, for example, rallies, marches, prayer vigils, street theatre and ceremonial presentations to community leaders.

These actions dramatize a social wrong, draw public attention to it and challenge bystanders, whether physically present or via social and mainstream media, to decide where they stand. They can be particularly creative, challenging, empowering and just plain fun.

For some people, their conscience leads them to go further than conventional forms of protest through sit-ins, blockades and so on. They believe that the legal system is being used to support structures which perpetrate injustice. Australia is not immune from such injustice. However, when considering protests which may invoke legal sanctions, it is imperative that participants receive training in principles of nonviolence. This is not only because nonviolence is consistent with our Christian values on loving everyone, even your “enemy”, but also because it is only nonviolent protest which wins public support.

Disclaimer: ARRCC supports free speech and an individual’s right to protest on issues they care about. However, ARRCC does not support or promote the breaking of laws, and cannot take responsibility for individuals who take action that lead to their arrest as part of peaceful protest activities.

Campaigns you can get involved in:

- » *Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC)*
www.arrcc.org.au/advocate and www.arrcc.org.au/go-fossil-free
- » *100% Renewable Energy*
www.solarcitizens.org.au
- » *Pacific Calling Partnership*
www.erc.org.au/pcp/
- » *Greenpeace Climate campaigns*
www.greenpeace.org/australia/en/what-we-do/climate/
- » *GetUp—online campaigns*
www.getup.org.au/campaigns
- » *Australian Youth Climate Coalition—a youth run climate change campaign*
www.aycc.org.au

Organisations that can run advocacy training for your group:

- » *Baptist World Aid Australia*
www.baptistworldaid.org.au/get-involved/be-vocal/catalyst
- » *TEAR Australia*
www.tear.org.au
- » *CounterAct*
counteract.org.au/
- » *Pace e Bene*
www.paceebene.org.au/
- » *The Change Agency*
www.thechangeagency.org
- » ARRCC offers training on request, depending on capacity. Contact info@arrcc.org.au

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the enormity of climate change.

At one level it's true that each of us can only do a little, yet as communities and movements, we have the real possibility of standing up against the forces which would destroy much that sustains life on earth. The stakes are high. For believers, complacency is not an ethical option.

As Christians we have reason to act in hope. We follow the example of Jesus who, in the face of the apathy and violence of his own time, persisted in his mission, sustained by the power of the Spirit and by faith. We may feel we don't have much to offer but we see the how the child who offered the five loaves and two fish had his offering transformed by Jesus to be enough to feed the five thousand.

We have as models those believers who helped transform the societies of their own time: Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, William Wilberforce, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and others. They engaged with the moral issues of their own societies and brought to them the values of the Gospel. We may not make the same impact, but now we are challenged in our own time, in our own small way, to do the same.

WITH THANKS TO:



Financial sponsors of the Climate Action Kits

CharlesElena design

Creative Brand Agency
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Design refresh and content update by **Looking Glass Press**. All links current as at July 2017.