

Uniting Church in Australia – Queensland Synod
Together on the way, enriching community



UNITING GREEN (QLD)

Uniting Green Project Officer
Supported by

Ms Katie Lewis
Rev Dr Clive W Ayre
Rev Judith Dalton

NEW!

Email green.church@ucaqld.com.au

Web <http://ucaqld.com.au/social-justice/uniting-green/>

NEW!

Uniting Green News 13

May 2013

GO GREEN 13!

Reaching out and speaking out for justice and peace for all creation
(Part of the Synod Vision 2020)

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1. **WELCOME KATIE LEWIS, UNITING GREEN PROJECT OFFICER**



A big welcome to Katie Lewis as Project Officer for Uniting Green. Katie is already working in the Synod Office as Research Officer in Uniting Communications, including the research on the impact of mining and coal seam gas, and is now extending her commitment a day a week. Thanks to the Synod Standing Committee and Katie for enabling Uniting Green to be officially integrated into the work of the Synod in this way.

Both Rev Dr Clive Ayre and I are delighted with this development, and will support Katie as she develops this role. We will still be available for presentations as requested, and contributing to Uniting Green News. This is the 13th quarterly edition of Uniting Green News... over the past three years. So it is time for some changes! The format will change, with some more regular and current information now able to be distributed through the new Uniting News. Please note that our website has already been moved to the new Synod website.

Judith Dalton

2. **SEASONAL REFLECTION:**

Reaching out and speaking out for justice and peace for all creation is surely Uniting Green's particular responsibility in preparation for the coming Synod meeting as *Disciples on the Way*. Caring for Creation has now been recognised as an integral part of the mission of the church, but it still tends to be sidelined in priorities of time and money, and our attention.

In this issue of Uniting Green News we have some significant opportunities and challenges. There is a new Uniting Church Resource for World Environment Day

which is focusing on food sustainability; Sharni Avery tells her own story of faith and following sustainable guidelines in building her home; there is the issue of investments in mining companies raised by the Synod of NSW and ACT.

What are we doing as individual Christians and as a Church with regards to minimising our ecological footprint (and FOODprint) in our daily living? This Pentecost may we allow the “whoosh” of the Holy Spirit to come into our lives to renew us and the whole creation.

Judith Dalton

3. ECO-MISSION CALENDAR 2013
INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR WATER COOPERATION
INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR QUINOA (see WED Resource)

May 22 [International Day for Biodiversity](#)

May 24-28 **Queensland Synod Meeting**
(See notes on calendar events for more info)

May 26 [National Sorry Day](#)

May 27-31 [National Reconciliation Week](#)

June 1 [Reef Walk 2013](#)

June 5 [World Environment Day](#)
(See section 6 for details on the
[World Environment Day 2013](#) resource)



June 8-11 [Brisbane Lifeline Bookfest at the Convention Centre](#)
(See notes on calendar events for more info)

September [Season of Creation](#)

NOTES ON CALENDAR EVENTS

May 24-28 Queensland Synod Meeting

*Together on the Way, enriching community... Disciples on the Way...
Reaching out and speaking out for justice and peace for all creation*



Look out for our Uniting Green KeepCups and show your commitment to being GREEN

Use separate bins for RECYCLABLES and waste

Go to the panel discussion and Q&A session on Sunday 26 May, 4 – 5:30pm on *the impacts of mining on communities and the environment*

The panellists will be:

- Rev David Ferguson, Minister Gregory Congregations and Central Queensland Presbytery Mining Impact Task Group convenor
- Jim Cavaye, Associate Professor, School of Agriculture and Food Science at University Queensland,
- Libby Connors, Senior Lecturer at the University of Southern Queensland and co-founder of the Queensland Greens.

Questions for the panellists can be submitted prior to the seminar, and may be asked by the audience during the event. To submit a question you must be a Synod member and be present at the event. Please email your questions to [Katie Lewis](#) by 24 May 2013 or to speak to Katie, phone 07 3377 9935.

June - August Reef Walk 2013

FootPrints for Peace are planning a [community walk](#) from Cairns to Gladstone to highlight the impact that coal exports will have on the Great Barrier Reef. The walk is supported by Friends of the Earth and Lock the Gate. It will commence in Cairns on Saturday 1 June and arrive in Gladstone mid August.

June 8-11 [Lifeline Bookfests in other towns](#)

People can drop books off at any Lifeline Shop or Distribution Centre, UnitingCare Community Office or Lifeline bin. If people have a lot of books to donate, they can contact the local distribution centre and a truck may be able to collect the donations.

Lifeline Bookfests <http://www.uccommunity.org.au/lifeline-brisbane-bookfest>

May 25-26	Rockhampton	RECYCLE
June 8-11	Brisbane	YOUR
June 28-July 1	Gold Coast	BOOKS
June 28-July 1	Mackay	FOR
Aug 3-5	Ipswich	OTHERS

4. GREEN STORIES

a. **UnitingCare Community Cairns Green Team switch off for Earth Hour**

The Cairns Green Team celebrated Earth Hour by asking staff to turn off their lights and computers and share lunch by candlelight.

They also organised a green trivia quiz and gave prizes to the winners. Prizes included bamboo toothbrushes and green shopping bags.

Standing from left to right – Mandy, Veronica, Graham and Katie, Sitting from left to right – Mai and Susan



b. **Sharni Avery, Moore Uniting Church, tells her personal faith and life story of eco-building her home (Moore Sustainability)**

It really becomes addictive; there is no way of denying its power over you. If you devour just a little bit it makes you want more. To understand where I'm coming from, allow me to explain my situation.

In August 2007, my husband, Graeme and I bought 50 acres of drought stricken, barren land. It was all due to prayer. I asked God that if we were meant to have this land, if it were his will, he would provide the finances for the purchase. I even made a promise to Him that if we got it I would use it in His Glory and share our land. I really felt this land was our blessing. That's where I believe it happened. He took me literally. There were plans for our land that we did not know about.

Our land is now starting to take shape; we are slowly building and creating an environment that is sustainable and environmentally friendly. That's what I have become addicted to: **being green.**

I did have a push or I think it was more like a shove over a very long cliff. I slowly became aware that I had grown sensitive to almost the whole world. I had to radically change my diet, chemicals which I used personally and within the home. I had to completely overhaul the lifestyle I lived. I always thought I lived a fairly healthy lifestyle, rarely ate take-away food, home cooked all biscuits, cakes, treats and all meals from scratch. I was a minimalist with chemicals, always believing in Bi-carb and vinegar to clean around the home. It just didn't stop there. I was a 'reduce, reuse and recycle' junkie. I would go out of my way just to deliver a box of that special item to a home to be recycled. It's always been in me, now it has to be. I'm at the stage where I want to make it my work, my passion, I want to share my knowledge and the knowledge of others and put into practice what I so passionately preach.



Possum Bush was born with sustainability as our main focus. I wanted to be at least 80% self-sufficient and this is still our goal. This is all going to take years for us as it is a learning curve for two ordinary people who applied for an owner builder's licence, and for me, a passion for the environment. Our first venture was building our humpy from

fallen trees and recycled roof iron.....and there we lived on weekends and Christmas holidays for 3 years. It was definitely the journey and not the destination for this project. We have learned to appreciate the moment and steps that are leading us. There is no doubt it has been difficult at times but if I had to choose what has made this project worth it, it would be the labour, the blood, sweat and even at times, tears. In those years we slowly cleaned up the bush and as time soldiered on we were blessed with rain and more rain and after that even more rain. Our Possum Bush began to green, our land was magnificent and there was hope that we could live here and be productive.

Graeme so skillfully built his shed from steel bought from auction which was second hand. He cut it, punched holes, welded it together



and then like a massive mechano set, joined the pieces and created a 11 x 12 metre, American Barn shed with a mezzanine floor. All of the iron cladding was second hand and bought from auction too. Two windows were purchase from recycling centres and the personal access door was off a job site which Graeme saved from being thrown out.

The masterpiece on our property, which was a long time coming, many hours of research is our 7.1kWh Hybrid Solar Power System. This was another decision that was made early on, not to connect to the grid. We were priced out of connecting to the grid. With a quote from Energex at \$10,000 per metre and being a mere 1.5km



from the nearest point, it really was a no brainer. There is something special about using the suns rays, using a natural resource to power a modern day life. When the sun shines we soak it up, utilising power to wash, build and have luxuries. On consecutive overcast days being conservative is part of a lifestyle we chose to live. The old saying “Make hay while the sun shines” always harmoniously sings in my head. It’s about planning, planning your days, your meals, work and leisure time.

We will never be connected to the water mains. The town of Moore, elected to not have town water connected. So neither will we. We only have a 22,700ltr tank connected to the shed but my plans are to have a 110,000ltr tank connected to the home. When it rains at Possum Bush it’s a time to harvest as much as you can.

There is no bin service so recycling becomes second nature and you become quite inventive and rather choosy on items you buy because of their packaging.

Finally, I chose a waste water treatment system for its amazing design. It uses 90% less power than a septic system, it uses no chemicals only bugs and microorganisms and it does not need a pump as it will be gravity fed onto an edible garden, and of course approved by council.

Today we have arrived at the point where we can start the house. We have had a few different machines in to prepare the house pad. We started with a drott, moved

to an excavator and finally a bobcat to finish it off. Would you think I'm crazy if I told you I already have the kitchen, my ultimate country kitchen? It was a bargain and Graeme encouraged me to "just go and get it". I hear you loud and clear, no, the plans have not been drawn up professionally yet, but I have drawn them to scale with detail. I have to find the right



person, a person who will understand that we want to use timber off our land, and use rock as features and to make an amazing statement, as many have done so before us when building an Owner builder / self-designed home.

The design will be an American Barn shed externally and the interior will be French Country style. As I will be living in a shed I have a few criteria that are a must: firstly the front of the house must open fully to the beautiful north facing mountains. I want bi-folds, but 18 metres is going to be expensive, so panel sliders will probably be the way that I go. Secondly, my oven is an amazing piece of English art, the old fashioned double hobbed oven doors and finally I want to use timber and rock off our land to use throughout the build.

I struggle with the local council's fees as a couple of them are unjustified (in my belief); they want us to submit and pay \$920 to state that our dirt road that we maintain is at an acceptable standard to use and we will not ask them to repair or maintain it at any time. The other is that we pay a fee every six months to apply to live on our land whilst we build, with a maximum of eighteen months of permits. Each permit rises in price. It's politics.

Leading up to this build has been an enormous amount of study and my main guide has been the Governments guide: *Smart & Sustainable Homes, Design Objectives*. I have found the internet, mostly Face Book sites, inspirational and I have gathered many ideas from these.

To be a part of our dream, to share the experience and even give some advice to two novices you can follow our journey on FB: Moore Sustainability or my new web site www.mooresustainability.info

Sharni Avery

c. Clive Ayre's Visit to Moruya

On a recent family-related visit to Moruya in southern New South Wales I had occasion to reflect on environmental matters, and in some small way to be encouraged.

Last year the Eurobodalla Shire Council ran an art competition for primary school children; the theme was "Fish Friendly Habitats", and the best picture from each school found its way to the 2013 calendar. This was a great way to encourage the young, and their efforts in the main were very good. I am happy to report that my granddaughter Rebecca won the competition for St Peter's Anglican College and appears for August. Her message was "Look after the ocean, and keep it clean".



Then in a local shopping centre at Batemans Bay we found a number of environmental messages around the public facilities; there was nothing earth-shattering about this, but just simple messages, reminders and opportunities to care for the planet. In a similar fashion the Botanical Gardens offered a number of ways in which children in particular could learn about

wildlife, while models of small forest creatures in such places as the hollow of logs gave them an idea of what to look for.

And if that wasn't enough, in a small bookshop in Moruya I found an important new book by Clive Hamilton! (See [Book Review section](#))

d. Koala Research

You might have noticed a recent news item concerning groundbreaking research at QUT. In a world first, the scientists have managed to sequence the genome of the koala, which will allow researchers to deal with two diseases, and not least Chlamydia. This opens up the possibility of developing a vaccine, and of



course has implications for other vulnerable species. One of the

leaders in this work is a committed Christian and a friend of mine, Dr Adam Polkinghorne.



We are engaged in an on-going conversation about the way in which science and theology are able to engage and inform each other in such matters.

Clive Ayre

5. ECUMENICAL ECO-MISSION

QCEN News

The first Annual Report of Qld Churches Environmental Network was presented to the AGM of Qld Churches Together on 13th April and was well received. This was also the first public occasion since the Network became a full Commission in February. Although QCEN has been in existence for less than a year and there is much to be done, a good start has nevertheless been made.

The group has been sharing information since the beginning, but the plan now is to be more intentional about identifying opportunities for joint action. An example of that process in action was the fact that a number of us attended a session presented recently by A/Prof Denis Edwards.

We have formed a small Task Group with a particular interest in working on the mining and agriculture issue; they will aim to keep the Network as a whole informed, while it is hoped that other Task Groups will also develop as a way of utilising the particular interests and gifts of people.

Clive W Ayre, Chair.

6. NEW RESOURCES FOR WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2013

from UCA Uniting Justice, Brisbane Anglican Angligreen, and the South Australian Council of Churches.

a. Uniting Church

Download the Uniting Church Resource for [World Environment Day 2013](#)

This year's focus is on sustainable food production and consumption. People from around Australia have contributed to a new Uniting Church Resource. **THINK-EAT-SAVE**



Biblical Reflections (by Rev Dr Clive Ayre) are based on the lectionary readings for the following **Sunday 9 June** (see Angligreen resource below for Sunday 2 June), but there are theological reflections, worship resources (including song suggestions), all age resources for activities, weblinks for information, and suggestions for further action which can be used at any time.

POINTS TO PONDER:

According to a recent report on global food waste we produce about four billion metric tonnes of food per annum. Yet due to poor practices in harvesting, storage and transportation, as well as market and consumer wastage, it is estimated that

30–50% (or 1.2–2 billion tonnes) of all food produced never reaches a human stomach.

Furthermore, this figure does not reflect the fact that large amounts of land, energy, fertilisers and water have also been lost in the production of foodstuffs which simply end up as waste. This level of wastage cannot continue if we are to succeed in the challenge of sustainably meeting our future food demands.

It takes 500 litres of water to produce a kilo of potatoes.

It takes 2,000 litres of water to produce a kilo of white rice

It takes 50,000 litres of water to produce a kilo of beef.

Organic matter such as food scraps that end up in landfill create methane gas as they break down. Methane is a significant greenhouse gas, which is at least

21 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Thus our food waste contributes to climate change. In 2005-07 ***methane from organic waste made up 86.5% of the greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector,*** which was the creator of 3% of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2005. This gives us the opportunity to protect our children and grandchildren from the dangers of climate change every day by being careful to create as little food waste as possible.

What is your Ecological "FOODprint"?

b. Angligrreen www.angligrreen.org.au

THINK. EAT SAVE World Environment Day Resource prepared by Rev Dr Jonathan Inkpin, with worship resources around the lectionary readings for **Sunday 2 June** will be available on the Angligrreen website.

c. The South Australian Council of Churches www.sacc.asn.au

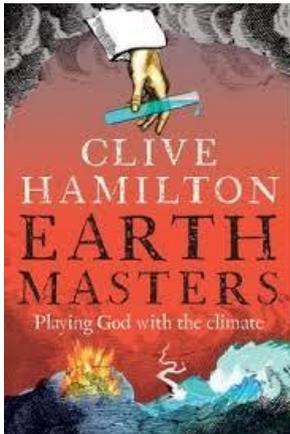
A collection of seven Resource sheets to guide **A DAY OF LISTENING** to the sounds and noises of our environment, to the cries of pain from our planet home, to the voices of hope stirring in Earth, which can be used for World Environment Day (or any other day).

Resource 1	5 Leads for Listening from the Bible
Resource 2	5 leads for Listening through the Day
Resource 3	5 Leads for Listening from the Mystics
Resource 4	5 Leads for Listening in Schools
Resource 5	5 Leads for Listening from A Rocha
Resource 6	5 Leads for Listening to God in Creation
Resource 7	5 Leads for Listening from Custodians of the Land

7. BOOK REVIEW

Earthmasters (Reviewed by Clive Ayre)

If you want to read a disturbing book, try “*Earthmasters: Playing God with the Climate*” by Clive Hamilton and published earlier this year (2013) by Allen and Unwin. Hamilton holds the Chair of Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at Charles Sturt University and is regarded as one of Australia’s leading thinkers. The broad theme of the book is an analysis of what has been called geoengineering. (That is a new word for my computer!)



As it says on the back cover, “While Washington, London and Canberra fiddle, the planet burns. It has become painfully clear that the big democracies won’t take the hard decisions to halt climate change. Climate scientists now expect the worst, and they’re considering a response which sounds like science fiction: climate engineering”. In brief, what it means is that it is too hard to cut greenhouse emissions, so let’s us forget that as a strategy and simply(?) engineer the climate instead. What temperature would you like to have? Fine! We can fix that.

A range of strategies have been proposed and are discussed in the book, such as spraying sulphur compounds into the upper atmosphere, manipulating the amount of sunlight to reach the Earth, or transforming the chemical structure of the oceans so they soak up more carbon. As Hamilton shows clearly, all of these are absolutely fraught, and the potential risks are huge. As the back cover states, “It is messing with nature on a scale we’ve never before seen, and it’s attracting a flood of interest from scientists, venture capitalists and oil companies.” This is undoubtedly a disturbing book, but it contains a message we all need to hear. What we do about it is another matter.

8. TRINITY LIBRARY <http://trinity.qld.edu.au/library/>

Reminder: All members of the Uniting Church have free membership of Trinity Library. And there is an increasing collection of material. There is also a growing EBook library, but separate registration is required, and it may take a day or two before you have access... so join now!

Information on the following books can be found through these links to the library catalogue:

- [*Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution*](#) (Leslie E. Sponsel, 2012)
- [*Moral issues and Christian responses*](#) (Edited by PB Jung and LS Jung, 8th edition, 2013)
- [*Rainbow of Mysteries: Meeting the Sacred in Nature*](#) (Norman Habel, 2012)
- [*'Inward and outward health' : John Wesley's holistic concept of medical science, the environment and holy living*](#) (Deborah Madden, 2008)
- [*Templeton science and religion reader*](#) (Edited by J. Wentzel van Huyssteen and Khalil Chamcham, 2012)

9. IN THE NEWS

i. Mongolia selected to host World Environment Day 2013

<http://www.unep.org/wed/news/hostcountry2013.asp>

Mongolia has been selected to host World Environment Day after being awarded for its progress towards a **Green Economy** (the focus in 2012).

Since 2010, Mongolia has **suspended the issuance of all new mining licenses** until fresh regulations are drawn up, citing the protection of the mineral-rich Asian country's environment and herdsman's livelihoods as well as promotion of green development with consideration of water shortage and land degradation.

It has passed a **law on decreasing the air pollution** that was triggered by a growing population and coal usage in the capital Ulaanbaatar. It is planning to establish a satellite-city near the capital for the purposes of limiting coal-burning in the capital, transferring energy-saving technology, and imposing **air-pollution tax** in some regions of Ulaanbaatar.

(If Mongolia can do this, can Australia do it too?

Judith Dalton)

ii. NSW Synod Decision to Divest from Companies extracting fossil fuels.

At its recent meeting the Synod of NSW/ACT agreed to call on the NSW government to end the disastrous effects of mining, <http://www.insights.uca.org.au/synod-2013/church-seeks-end-to-disastrous-effects-of-mining>

It also decided to move its own investments away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy.

<http://www.insights.uca.org.au/synod-2013/church-to-divest-from-corporations-engaged-in-the-extraction-of-fossil-fuels>

It is also asking Synods, and individuals, to take action too.

It received coverage on the 350.org blog, with positive comments including it being good to hear a good news story about the church.

<http://350.org/en/about/blogs/how-divestment-happens-inside-story-uniting-church-nsw-act>

Response from General Secretary:

The Uniting Church in Queensland commends the actions of the Uniting Church NSW and ACT Synod to divest from corporations engaged in the extraction of fossil fuels. In response to some enquiries received at the Synod office, we can confirm that the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod holds no investments in mining companies in Australia or overseas. Any investments which the Synod makes are framed by the [Synod's Ethical Investment guidelines](#).

Dr Shirley Coulson
General Secretary

10. ECOMISSION DEVELOPMENT

Pilgrim Learning Community On-line Course

A new multi-level course on eco-theology and mission is being prepared and will be available through Pilgrim Learning Community. So watch out for it!

11. CONTACT UNITING GREEN (QLD)

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