

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



UNITING GREEN (QLD)

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Uniting Green News 14

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SUSTAINING CREATION

*The prospect of doing too little too late leads many people to despair.
But as people of faith, captives of hope, and vehicles of God's promise,
we face the crisis.*

(Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

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1. SEASONAL REFLECTION

September sees the celebration of the Season of Creation in the Church year, and also the long awaited election. UCA President Rev Prof Andrew Dutney has joined other leaders from many faiths in an Open Letter calling Climate Change *one of the most urgent moral issues facing us in the upcoming election.... we urge all Australians to give this moral issue the attention it demands. Our world is a blessing, a gift, and a responsibility. We must act now if we are to protect this sacred trust.* (Section 5)

The Climate Commission notes that we are already *a quarter of the way through this Critical Decade* and with the need to virtually decarbonise within the next 35 years we should be leaving fossil fuels in the ground. (Section 8)

In this edition of Uniting Green News there are stories and resources to encourage reflection, prayer, practical action and, most importantly at this time, political engagement in living out our faith in caring for creation.

***The prospect of doing too little too late leads many people to despair.
But as people of faith, captives of hope, and vehicles of God's promise,
we face the crisis.***

God bless you all, individually and as communities of faith, as you become the active grass roots for change in the community!

Judith Dalton

2. ECO-MISSION CALENDAR 2013

1 Sept- 4 Oct	Season of Creation	(See Section 7)
Sept 29	Social Justice Sunday: <i>Justice matters</i>	(National Council of Churches Australia http://www.ncca.org.au/departments/social-justice)
September	Biodiversity month	http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/month.html
October	Walk or Ride to Worship	(See Section 5)

3. GREEN STORIES

i. Blue Care *Being green: part of everything we do*

Blue Care, which is one of the caring arms of the UC in Queensland and one of the major operators in the field is also very pro-active environmentally. The June issue of Blue Care News has a full page headed “Being green: part of everything we do”. Rev Heather den Houting, the Director of Mission, writes about their Sustainability Task Group and the practice of having Sustainability Champions across the organisation.

Heather says “Blue Care is committed to reducing our energy consumption, carbon emissions and waste wherever we can; to using our resources responsibly and efficiently to minimise the demands placed on the planet”.

They are trialling several new initiatives on energy efficiency, and hoping to see reduced power bills.

86% of the fleet is now four-cylinder cars, and 8% hybrid petrol-electric cars, with more planned. And there is a reminder to check tyre pressure regularly to maintain efficiency.

ii. Uniting Care Community

Congratulations! The Uniting Care Community state office has reduced its energy consumption by 20%, saving over \$8750 in 5 months. This is equivalent to carbon emission (Coe) savings of 15 passenger cars on the road for a year and the electricity usage for a year of 11 households.

A state-wide staff survey recently identified the following results:

- 70% of people use either a personal vehicle or work vehicle to travel to and from work

Most significant environmental issues facing UCC

- Energy Efficiency
- Waste Management
- Procurement and Purchasing

Motivations to be more environmental conscious at work

- 80% Visual signs and reminders
- 88 % Simplified systems
- 80% More commitment from management

Suggested activities for UCC to reduce its environmental impact

- Recycling
- Switch off appliances
- Solar Energy

Methods most effective for communicating the environmental message

- Email/Intranet
- Team Meetings
- Managers/supervisors

Judene Andrews

iii. Application for mining research project unsuccessful

The Uniting Church in Queensland, along with nine other community-based organisations and The University of Queensland, applied for a grant with the Australian Research Council and were unsuccessful.

The purpose of the project was to understand the socioeconomic impacts of mineral resources development on people who are vulnerable and the implications for human services providers.

Regardless of this outcome, the Church will continue to work towards improving the situation of people who are disadvantaged in mining communities. We must not forget the work of the many Uniting Church ministers and congregations who face these issues on a day-to-day basis and who continue to be heavily engaged in their local communities. There are also other projects happening across Queensland such as the Leichhardt patrol, a presbytery patrol minister serving communities including those impacted by coal and coal seam gas exploration, and the mining chaplaincy research project which is in its draft phase.

Katie Lewis

iv. Fitzgibbon Chase Community Garden

On 27th July I attended the launch of a Community Garden in the Fitzgibbon Chase Estate on the north side of Brisbane. The plan has been in preparation for some time, and a group of about 30 gathered for the special day. The highlight of the morning was the planting of a Bay Tree, which in ancient mythology was used to symbolise an achievement.



Although this is not a Church project, the undergirding values are consistent with our own; e.g., they speak of “an inclusive and connected community”, or “living our diversity and sharing it with others”. Although a lot of hard work has been done by “The Green Team”, various others have also made substantial contributions. It is noteworthy that there is a waiting list to join the group.

Clive Ayre

4. ECUMENICAL ECO-MISSION:

i. Qld Churches Environmental Network (QCEN)

Progress has been made on a QCEN webpage as part of the QCT site; hopefully this will be up and running shortly.

A Statement of Principles on Mining and Rural Communities is currently before the QCT Executive; some fine tuning needs to be done, after which it will be reconsidered.

The Toowoomba Ecumenical Environmental Network (TEEN) has made a very good start and is active.

ii. National Council of Churches Australia Eco-Mission Project

Three additional Churches have joined the Eco-Mission project: the Indian Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Salvation Army

The number of State-based groups has continued to increase.

5. INTERFAITH ACTION

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC)

i. Open Letter on Climate Change from Religious Leaders

As people of faith, we draw attention to one of the most urgent moral issues facing us in the upcoming election.

The International Energy Agency and other influential bodies are now warning us about an unthinkable 4 degree Celsius rise in temperatures if greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase. Recent experiences of extreme weather events, both here and overseas, are a mild foretaste of what this will mean. We are despoiling the world given to us as a sacred trust for future generations.

The world is already moving to take strong preventative action. Ninety countries, representing 90 per cent of global emissions, have carbon reduction programs in place and Australia now has a price on carbon. However our country continues to be a significant contributor to the problem. With our small population, we are among the world's 20 largest emitters and one of the two largest coal exporters.

We must wind back our exports of cheap coal which are currently hindering the global drive for renewable energy. We must diminish our reliance on fossil fuels and replace them with clean, renewable sources of energy. As part of this, carbon pricing must be given bipartisan support. Only then will Australia be part of the solution.

In the upcoming election we urge all Australians to give this moral issue the attention it demands. Our world is a blessing, a gift, and a responsibility. We must act now if we are to protect this sacred trust.

Signatories:

Rev. Professor Andrew Dutney, President, Uniting Church of Australia National Assembly, Archbishop Philip Wilson, Archbishop of Adelaide and Chair of Catholic Earthcare Australia, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammad, Grand Mufti of

Australia, Professor Nihal Agar, Chairman, Hindu Council of Australia, Ajahn Barhm, Chair, Australian Sangha Association, Abbot of Bodhinyana Monastery, Sr Annette Cunliffe rsc, President, Catholic Religious Australia, Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence, Senior Rabbi, The Great Synagogue, Sydney, Rev. Dr Brian Brown, Moderator, Uniting Church of Australia NSW and ACT Synod, Bishop George Browning, Convenor, Anglican Communion Environment Network, Professor Neil Ormerod, Professor of Theology, Australian Catholic University

ii. For the planet, the poor and your health, Walk or Ride to Worship in October 2013

Join with people from across Australia and make a sustainable transport choice for worship this October. All you need to do is to choose a day to walk, cycle, or use another form of environmentally friendly transport to get to and from worship. You can join in as an individual, a family, or as a whole church. Read more about Walk or Ride to Worship, access resources for your community, and register your participation at www.arrcc.org.au/walk-ride-to-worship-Oct-2013. Walk or Ride to Worship is an initiative of Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC).

6. TRINITY LIBRARY: E-Book library <http://library.trinity.qld.edu.au/>

Learn to use the EBook Library Catalogue for books on ecotheology and environment and related topics. It is searched separately from the main Library catalogue.

- Look for the search box in the lower left hand corner of the Library home page.
- First you need to Create an Account. (Only accounts created by Library members can be approved.)
- Your login details enable you to then search the EBook Library catalogue on topics like ‘ecotheology’ and “environment*” and related topics.
- eBooks can be read online or downloaded.

This is a free service to library members. It’s possible to register as a member online. Help to search the EBook Library catalogue is always available at library@ucaqld.com.au or 07 3876 7106.

7. NEW RESOURCES

i. Season of Creation <http://seasonofcreation.com/>

The Season of Creation has now become an accepted season of the Church year in many churches. Beginning with the Eastern Orthodox celebration of creation on September 1 at the start of their church year, it continues through September to St Francis Day on October 4. There are separate lectionary readings, for each year of the 3-year cycle, with suggestions for liturgy, preaching and Bible Studies.

The themes for 2013 (year C), Wisdom in Creation, are as follows:

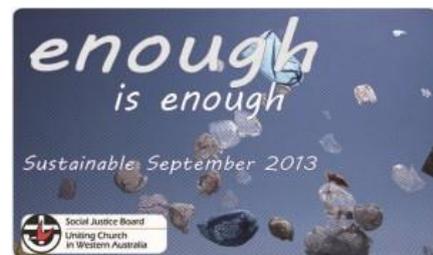
September 1	Creation Day
September 1	1st Sunday in Creation – Ocean Sunday
September 8	2nd Sunday in Creation – Fauna and Flora Sunday
September 15	3rd Sunday in Creation – Storm Sunday
September 22	4th Sunday in Creation – Cosmos Sunday
September 29	5th Sunday in Creation – Blessings of the Animals
October 4	St Francis of Assisi Day

ii. Sustainable September 2013

http://green.wa.uca.org.au/?page_id=96

Western Australia have celebrated “Sustainable September” for several years, and 2013 resources “Enough is enough” are now available. These follow the Revised Common Lectionary readings:

Sept 1	Enough for all
Sept 8	It’s not all about me
Sept 15	Finding the hidden and the lost
Sept 22	Enough- God first!



iii. Election Issues <http://www.unitingjustice.org.au/election2013>

UnitingJustice has produced a kit to help church members consider important election issues, including climate change. It suggests key questions to ask candidates in seeking to cast an informed vote.



- Will your party keep the price on carbon and commit itself to long-term investment in a green economy through renewable energy sources?
- What will your party do to ensure that Australia reaches and exceeds its target 20% renewable energy by 2020?
- What commitment will your party make to the Kyoto Protocol and leadership on cutting fuel emissions?

You might also like to check out the following websites that highlight the various environmental policies of the major parties/MPs:

- The Climate Institute has a 2013 Pollute-o-Meter which compares the policies of the major parties – www.2013pollute-o-meter.org.au
- Environment Victoria has Envirotracker: a running snapshot of where the major parties stand on climate and renewable energy, public transport, biodiversity, forests and marine protection, and national environment laws. <http://environmentvictoria.org.au/thechoice2013>
- The 100% renewables campaign has a solar scorecard on all current federal MPs: <http://solarscorecard.org.au/>.

iv. ARRCC's Climate Change Action Kit <http://www.arrcc.org.au>

The Australian Religious Response to Climate Change has launched their new resource to help churches to address climate change. It can be downloaded from their website. Similar Kits for other faiths are also being prepared.

This **Christian Climate Change Action Kit** draws together resources for reflection and presents a diversity of sustainable actions for our Earth.



ARRCC's Christian Climate Action Kit provides a wide range of well-grounded, easy-to-use, creative ideas to assist communities to make Creation care a reality. From encouraging an appreciation of our connections with Creation to the basic science, worship materials to advocacy, it's a comprehensive resource, with links to other excellent resources. Readers will find it's beautifully presented and it's free.

(Thea Ormerod, ARRCC President)

8. IN THE NEWS

i. The Climate Commission Critical Decade Reports

For reliable information on climate change see the Reports, Powerpoint presentations and excellent infographics from the Climate Commission:

<http://climatecommission.gov.au/>

One quarter of the way through the Critical Decade, many consequences of climate change are already evident, and the risks of further climate change are better understood. It is clear that global society must virtually decarbonise in the next 30-35 years. This means that most of the fossil fuel reserves must stay in the ground.

(The Critical Decade 2013: Climate Change Science, Risks and Responses)

ii. Open Letter on Market Forces

www.marketforces.org.au/openletter

An open letter to the big banks urging them to reduce investment in fossil fuels appeared in the Weekend Australian Magazine 29 June:

We write to urge you to adopt a critical change to your banks' investment policies.

Australia stands on the verge of a fossil fuel expansion that would jeopardise the possibility of containing global warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels – a key marker for the prospects of a safe climate for future generations to enjoy.

As Australia's four largest banks and heaviest lenders to coal and gas projects, you have a vital role in determining the fate of proposed new fossil fuel projects. You will be met with requests to provide finance and other forms of investment for these projects. For the sake of a safe climate, these requests must be denied.

Specifically we are asking you to demonstrate courage and leadership by adopting the following two policy changes:

1. Place an immediate prohibition on loans to new fossil fuel extraction projects and the infrastructure required to enable them, and

2. Sell down all stakes held either directly or through third parties in companies engaged in fossil fuel extraction.

There is very little time remaining to avoid catastrophic climate change. The International Energy Agency's Chief Economist, Fatih Birol, said in late 2011 that the world had only five years in which to move off a fossil fuel pathway. Many of the projects that will be seeking your investment would operate for decades, making them entirely incompatible with any serious effort to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Others are warning of the economic risks of continued investment in fossil fuels. If the world is to avoid 2°C of global warming it will mean leaving the vast bulk of known fossil fuel reserves in the ground. Failing to acknowledge this now could be a multi-trillion dollar mistake for the fossil fuel industry and institutions that finance them.

We urge you to adopt these changes to your investment policies for the sake of the environment and economic responsibility.

Signatures... including Rev Dr Clive Ayre, (Chair, Qld Churches Environmental Network)

You too can support this campaign by adding your signature to the open letter on the website.

9. ECO-MISSION DEVELOPMENT

Many, many thanks to Katie Lewis for the new **Uniting Green website**, now reformatted and updated and incorporated into the UCA Qld Social Justice website. Check it out! <http://ucaqld.com.au/social-justice/uniting-green/>

Also, check out the new **Angligreen website**: <http://www.angligreen.org.au/>

10. CONTACT UNITING GREEN

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