

The Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn's Environmental Policy

Underlying Principles and Objectives

Introduction

Synod 2007 accepted that:

- The bond between Creator and creation underlies our whole relationship with God and it is clear from scripture that this bond is not just with humanity but with the whole of creation (e.g. John 1: 3; Romans 8: 20-21);
- As a consequence, it is essential that the Church takes this relationship seriously and seeks to express it rightly and fully, remembering that only those whose words result in relevant action are blessed (James 1: 22-25).

These Principles and Objectives aim to:

- extend the Diocese's knowledge of the key environmental issue of the 21st century, namely the role of human behaviour and numbers in the endangering and destruction of creation on this planet; and
- formulate and implement mechanisms by which the Church may responsibly respond to this challenge both as a faith community and as a corporate citizen.

To give effect to these Principles and Objectives, Synod:

- affirmed its commitment to examining processes within the Diocese which will move us towards more responsible environmental behaviour; and requested that the Environment Commission, reporting to Bishop in Council, specifically examine the means and financial implications of achieving improved energy efficiency at least 20% by 2010 and 50% by 2020, of the Church's facilities and operations."

Strategies and Actions

The strategy comprised of actions on the following four fronts:

1. Climate Change and Energy
2. Water
3. Biodiversity conservation
4. Education and advocacy

Each of these items is briefly described below with separate, more detailed, action plans either available now, or in the course of development. Schedules to be developed with each detailed item will provide indicative timetables, deliverables and outcomes, and resource requirements. The Environment Commission is to bring forward these implementation plans as soon as possible, within the constraints of its volunteer membership and with the assistance of the Diocesan Registry and other interested individuals and groups appointed from time to time. Ultimately however success will depend on responsible behaviour by individuals, parishes and other entities.

Given the rapidly changing circumstances and state of scientific knowledge regarding the environment, the targets established in this and the related documents are to be reviewed by the Environment Commission as often as is necessary and at no longer than two yearly intervals. Bishop in Council will then be advised of any recommended changes.

1. Climate Change and Energy

Synod 2007 has already recognised *'the need for the Church to establish mechanisms by which it may conscientiously respond to this threat to the integrity of creation on this planet by changing its behaviour so that it does not contribute to a human-induced increase in global average surface temperature of more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels.'*

Unless given a specific exemption after an examination of practicality, costs and benefits, parishes and other diocesan entities will act according to the following minimum standards.

Buildings (see detailed policy 'Sustainable Buildings and Energy Conservation' [in preparation] and *'Building a better relationship with our world: a green guide for people in parishes'*)

1. all new and major refits of church buildings to have an star rating at least one additional star above the relevant Building Codes of Australia requirements;
2. all new and major refits of Diocesan office buildings to achieve at least a 5 Green Star rating on the Green Building Council of Australia's rating scale;
3. the Church's facilities and day-to-day operations to be adapted so as to improve their energy efficiencies

4. where possible, stationary (non-automotive) energy is to be sourced from renewable supplies or offset with new clean energy capacity;

Transport (see detailed policy ‘Sustainable Vehicle Policy’ and ‘*Building a better relationship with our world: a green guide for people in parishes*’)

1. all Diocesan motor vehicles to achieve a minimum Greenhouse Rating of 7;
2. improving the use of alternative transport options such as public transport, teleconferencing, car pooling, walking and cycling; and

Green Fund (see detailed proposal ‘Green Fund’ [in preparation])

1. establish a Green Fund to assist Diocesan entities to undertake environmentally beneficial activities.

Supporting the disadvantaged

1. Diocesan institutions need to be strengthened to enable them to support disadvantaged people and groups in our Diocese who are likely to be impacted negatively in transitioning to a lower carbon economy.

2. Water

To establish sustainable water use as a moral choice for concerned Christians, and to provide a framework from which the Church community can make informed choices toward effective actions (see detailed policy ‘Sustainable water use’ [in preparation] and ‘*Building a better relationship with our world: a green guide for people in parishes*’). To this end, the Church’s facilities and day-to-day operations are to be adapted so as to improve their water use efficiencies

1. Assemble factual information on the status of water collection, use and disposal across diocesan facilities
2. provide resource materials with particular relevance to water, and a guide for their use
3. Coordinate with the National Water Commission and other organisations on programs for community facilities and projects relevant to parishes and other agencies.

3. Biodiversity Conservation

The Church will avoid and act against human-mediated loss of biodiversity (see detailed policy ‘Caring for Creation’ [in preparation] and ‘*Building a better relationship with our world: a green guide for people in parishes*’). To this end it should seek to maintain critical biodiversity when it occurs on its own properties by:

1. making an environmental inventory of listed plants, animals and ecosystems present on land in church care;

2. seeking assistance from the Environment Commission in developing plans for the management and celebration of these special but often overlooked parts of God's creation;
3. consulting with the Environment Commission and relevant government agencies before developing and/or changing use of land that would affect listed species and ecosystems; and
4. ensuring that the environmental impact of parish activities receives careful consideration along with their social and financial implications (implying adoption of "triple bottom line reporting" covering social, economic and environmental factors).

4. Education and advocacy

Bishop in Council expects the Environment Commission to provide an education and advocacy program to enable the Church to improve understanding and knowledge throughout the Church and wider community of issues relating to climate change and other environmental impacts. This is critical to empowering the Church and its various bodies to initiate actions relevant to the preservation of the environment.

Such a program will include:

1. Support for the Diocesan Leadership in advocating a responsible and sustainable approach to environmental policies, and their social impact;
2. Establishing environmental projects to be carried out by a policy officer in the Registry office;
3. Regularly updating and distributing a '*Green Guide for People in Parishes: a green guide for people in parishes*' (available from the Commission website or from the Registrar);
4. Ensuring suitable Creation Sunday liturgies are available (available on the Commission website);
5. Further developing and distributing the environmental audit for parishes (available on the Commission website);
6. Collaborating with other Dioceses and Church bodies to facilitate joint actions relevant to the Commission's charter and to gain from the experience of others. (The Commission is an active member of the Anglican Environment Network AAEN, see <http://www.aaen.org.au/>);
7. Supporting and participating in Diocesan education programs eg the C3 youth program;
8. Maintaining and further developing an internet web site, linked to the Diocesan web site (see <http://www.pastornet.net.au/envcomm/>);