

Commission visits Young

The Commission has set itself to visit the different regions of the Diocese so as to share insights and ideas with parishioners. We hope to find ways to effectively support on ground projects by local groups. Last year the Narooma district was visited while this time Young and surrounding parishes was the goal. Our next visit is to the parishes in Belconnen.

Four members of the Commission, Charles Body, Linda Chapman, Bill Leane, and Barry Richardson, visited Young in March to be greeted by David Hill, and interested parishioners. The day started with a talk and reflection by Linda on creation spirituality. She drew the writings of Christians through the ages who have recognized the link between the love of God enacted in creation and in redemption. Discussion of those things that helped us find a sense of place and space helped us to identify more clearly who we are and where we stand.

Barry then spoke on the theological and moral bases for behaviour that can be derived from Jesus' teaching and provide us with a basis for making Christian choices in our behaviour towards creation. We considered particularly the issue of 'who is our neighbour?' Three 'neighbours' were identified as of particular relevance: those of future generations, those who lived elsewhere in the Murray-Darling basin and the plant and animal communities of the region. We wrestled with the difficulties in finding just balances between options in such matters as shared water resources. We each then spent time identifying those values we use when we make personal decisions that might affect the environment.

Bill then talked about how the Commission was established and some of its projects. He emphasised the need for the church to get its house in order before it had the right to say anything about the behaviour of the wider community. Of special interest to those at the meeting in Young were issues of energy conservation and management, and Bill talked through the kinds of practical issues that needed to be considered in managing facilities and some of the approaches being used in other parts of the church.

Discussion then followed on the issues that needed to be addressed in Young. These centred particularly on energy management in the parish.

There was a general feeling of renewed energy at the end of the day. Both parishioners and Commission members came away with the sense that they were not alone and that others, each in their own way, were seeking to act responsibly before their Creator.

The Commission plans to hold similar meetings in other parts of the Diocese and would like to hear from any group willing to host such a meeting. The next meeting will be held in Belconnen later in the year. Opportunities exist to apply for funds to assist certain projects (eg water management) and the Commission is happy to advise those interested in developing proposals. The church elsewhere has already been successful in this approach.