

Commission for the Environment

CHARTER

The Commission for the Environment was set up under Synod Motion 974/01 and the original members were appointed by the Bishop-in-Council in February 2002. The Commission has the following terms of reference:

The Diocesan Commission for the Environment will work to promote a Christian theology of the environment and a sense of responsibility for environmental issues, both at local and global levels. It will seek to provide objective guidance and direction on how the church might creatively address the problems and challenges that face our communities.

The Commission will promote the Christian obligation to nurture and care for the environment at three levels in the Church:

- Church as an institution or organisation,
- Church as a Faith Community, and,
- Church as an influential party in the development of community and governmental attitudes and policies.

ACCESS

The Commission can be contacted through its web page

(<http://www.pastornet.net.au/envcomm/>)

or through its Chair, Barry Richardson, 02 6258 1195, barrysalt@bigpond.com.au

MEMBERSHIP

The members of the Commission are:

Barry Richardson (Chair)

Charles Body

Linda Chapman

Rod Corrigan

Keith Croker

Graeme Garrett (on leave)

Nick Hutchins (Diocese of Riverina)

Bill Leane

Christine Ledger

Alice Murray

Stephen Palethorpe

Jim Rees

John Walker

During the year the Commission welcomed two new members; Jim Rees from Wagga Wagga who has a background in environmental education with children, Keith Croker, who has experience in energy policy, and Alice Murray, a PhD student at St Marks.

ACTIVITIES

Over the past year the Commission has sought to carry out its mandate through a series of programmes.

Creation Sunday

Creation Sunday this year is the Sunday after Synod. As well as the third year of Eucharist services cycle, a new service, analogous to 'Nine lessons and Carols', in style explores the theological issues of the relationship between Creator and Creation based on nine readings from the Old and New Testaments. The Commission would be very interested to hear from parishes as to how they celebrated the day.

Energy-efficient Retro-fitting of Diocesan Buildings now under way

An initiative of the Diocesan Commission for the Environment has been to improve the practical performance of diocesan facilities in terms of energy management. We are pleased to report that contracts have now been signed and work is proceeding with the retro-fits. This important activity will save money for participating facilities at the same time as improving the environmental performance of church assets. The focus on energy savings also sends a clear message to the faith community that environmental improvement is being done in a way that cuts costs, and brings increased amenity to facility users.

Water conservation retro-fitting of parish buildings

Following successful initiation of the energy retro-fit program, the Commission is exploring with Parishes the possibility of applying future technology that incorporates systems-based control of domestic water use. This integrates secure (mains supply, plus greywater) and opportunistic (stormwater and tank collected runoff) water sources, and directs the available resources to appropriate 'fit for purpose' use - i.e. potable (drinking and bathing) and non-potable (toilet flushing, garden and external washdown). The company, Perpetual Water, has agreed with the Commission, and will collaborate on a submission, to install 10 (or more) of these units in the Diocese under an Australian Government Water Fund Community Water Grants project. This is subject of course to sufficient parishes becoming involved.

Environmental Education

A multi-week course consisting of a series of bible readings, background material and discussion questions has been prepared. A column considering environmental matters has continued to appear in *Anglican News* over the past year. As in previous years, a representative of the Commission also attended Convo3 to lead a workshop on a Christian response to environmental issues. The Commission website is regularly updated and all material mentioned in this report can be found on the site, along with information about Christian environmental action elsewhere in the world.

Regional Meetings

The Commission holds local/regional meetings on environmental matters. This year a meeting was held in Young. The next meeting is planned for Belconnen, later in the year. We would welcome enquiries from any parish or group of parishes who would be interested in hosting such a meeting. The Commission has also arranged to attend meetings of rural deaneries.

Coordination with rest of Province

Contact, including visits and exchanges of material, has continued with Commissions in several other diocese, particularly Newcastle and Grafton.

Public Advocacy

The Commission has made submissions to the ACT Climate Change Strategy and Energy Policy and to the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Environment inquiry into the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The submissions are available on the Commission website.

The Future

Over the next year the Commission will be updating the material needed for next year's Creation Sunday. As we have now completed preparing material based on each of the three-year lectionary cycle, this will consist of the refinement of the present material. Further study material, aimed at assisting Christians to consider their options and responsibilities before the Creator towards Creation, will be prepared.

Practical water and energy use projects will continue to be developed as will practical material to help parishes and individuals develop environmentally responsible behaviour. Ways to assist parishes will be explored through the continuing cycle of regional meetings.

FINANCES

The costs of the Commission are small and are met by the Diocese.

Professor Barry Richardson (Chair)