

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)

Linda Chapman

Rod Corrigan

Keith Croker

Anna Dalziell

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 one new member, Anna Dalziell, a PhD student at ANU, and farewelled Charles Body who has been a hard-working member since the inception of the Commission.

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. The year C version of the Eucharist is available on the Commission's web site. As well there is service of bible readings and prayers that explores the relationship between Creator and Creation that can be used at non-Communion service times. For those wishing to celebrate issues of Creator and creation at other times of the year eg St Francis day or Environment Sunday, a set of Seasonal variations (including Invitation to Confession, Preface, etc), are available on the web-site.

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 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.

Diocesan Vehicle Policy

A diocesan vehicle policy was prepared and has been accepted by Bishop-in-Council. It is available on the Commission web-site. This adds to the previously prepared Green Building policy which is also available on the web-site.

Environmental Education

A column considering environmental matters has continued to appear in *Anglican News* over the past year. All past columns are available on the web-site and make interesting reading on a wide range of topics. 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.

Parish Handbook

The Commission prepared a handbook for use by parishes entitled *Building a better relationship with our world: A green guide for people in parishes*. This has been printed and distributed to all parishes in the Diocese. This covers such topics as water, waste, energy and transport management and gardens. It is available from each rector or via the Commission web-site.

Regional and Parish Meetings

The Commission holds local/regional meetings on environmental matters. This year, two meetings were held, one in Belconnen and the other in Bega. We would welcome enquiries from any parish or group of parishes who would be interested in hosting such a meeting. Two parishes invited the Commission to visit, All Saints and St Johns, and presentations and discussions were held with groups of parishioners in each place.

It is very pleasing to report that two parishes, Bega and Reid have established environmental working groups as sub-committees of their parish councils this year. Hopefully other parishes will follow their example. In each case the groups will concentrate on issues particularly relevant to the management of the specific parish. The Commission looks forward to assisting such 'on-the-ground' groups as it is able.

Coordination with rest of Province

Contact, including visits and exchanges of material, has continued with Commissions in several other diocese. It is pleasing to report that the Archdioceses of Melbourne and Perth now have Environment Commissions. The Commission has also been involved in the establishment of the Australian Anglican Environment Network. (<http://www.aaen.org.au/>).

Public Advocacy

No submissions were made this year

The Future

The Commission sees the future of environmental projects in the diocese as having a largely local, focus, with parishes taking the lead with support from the Commission if needed.

Further study material, aimed at assisting Christians to consider their options and responsibilities before the Creator towards Creation, will be prepared.

It is now three years since parishes carried out environmental audits. Consideration is being given to repeating this over the next year to see what progress has been made over the period.

Ways to assist parishes will be explored through the continuing cycle of regional face-to-face meetings.

FINANCES

The costs of the Commission were small, consisting of the cost of printing the Handbook, and were met by the Diocese.

Dr Barry Richardson (Chair)