



The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland

Report to Eighteenth Session of the General Synod – Protection of the Environment Canon

The Diocese of Gippsland has adopted the Protection of the Environment Canon. The Diocese affirms its commitment to the Five Marks of Mission of the Worldwide Anglican Communion, especially in reference to the fifth “mark” being: *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.*

Through the adoption of the Canon the following responses have been initiated in the Diocese:

Mechanisms to assist in the protecting the environment.

(1) Reduction in environmental footprint

Since the previous General Synod, the following initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint of church operations in the Diocese:

- A) Installation of 64 energy efficient heat pump hot water services across 95 independent living units in the Diocesan Retirement Village, Clifton Waters Village
- B) Environmental initiative of The Abbey
 - a. Annual planting schedule of over 1000 plants annually since 2014
 - b. Installation of photovoltaic solar panels on residential units at The Abbey at Raymond Island
 - c. Development of a partnership with Gippsland Grammar to engage students in curriculum studies in environmental issues and engagement with environmental activities, such as plantings, biosphere site audits, etc.
 - d. Establishing partnerships with environmental and indigenous organisations to further the knowledge of indigenous land management practices, and habitat preservation works protecting endangered species.
- C) Emissions reduction programs across Diocese
 - a. Emissions reduction program for parishes involving engaging with a private firm supplying State Government funded energy reduction programs to assist with energy use audits, replacement of aged heating and colling assets
- D) Establishment of Community Gardens in various parishes. The environmental benefits derived from these initiatives include:
 - a. The reduction in ‘food miles’ in fresh produce
 - b. Reduction of chemical toxins, both herbicides and pesticides in localised food production
 - c. Protection of pollinators in the environment

- d. Improvement in air quality through oxygen generation of increased plantings
 - e. Community gardens foster a sense of community and stewardship of the land.
- E) Planter Box Community Development Project
- a. Establishing partnerships with community organisations including men's sheds, community organisations such as Lions and Neighbourhood Houses to build and distribute wicking bed planter boxes in public spaces across the Diocese, as well as providing access to raised access planter boxes for aged and mobility restricted people.
- F) Resolutions regarding surplus funds from sale of parish property to be applied to protecting the environment.
- Bishop in Council passed the following resolution regarding the use of surplus funds from sale of Diocesan properties to reduce our environmental impact:
- “Resolution 1910/11 resolved that Council endorse that proceeds from the sale of parish property be allocated in the following order:*
- a. *Discharge of any existing unpaid stipend / assessment monies due to the Diocese;*
 - b. *Carry out any upgrade / repairs to church buildings / rectory following a property inspection;*
 - c. ***Installation of energy efficiency measures (such as solar power, solar hot water and / or LED lighting); and***
 - d. *Any residue be placed in ADF funds.”*
- G) Creation of ACTinG – Acting on Climate Together in Gippsland; a gathering of Gippsland Anglicans to prioritise the focus on climate awareness and action throughout the next Synod cycle of 3 years.
- H) Anglican Earthcare Gippsland
- a. Promotion of tax deductible charity to raise funds for environmental initiatives across the Diocese
- I) Future initiatives
- a. Energy efficiency in Retirement Villages with forward plans to door seals, fan seals, water saving shower heads and energy efficient lighting in publicly communal areas, such as street and safety lighting.
 - b. Purchase of electric cars. As the available network of re-charging stations continues to improve in rural and regional Victoria the attractiveness and suitability of electric cars is to be considered in future Diocesan vehicle purchases.
 - c. Presentation of Motions to Synod 2022 encouraging participation in environmental action for Gippsland Anglicans

(2) Establishment of procedures and policies

Responding to the Canon was placed on the agenda of the Bishop in Council to maintain its visibility before the key governance body of the Diocese. Various environmental initiatives were brought before the Council as an educative tool, raising awareness of environmental initiatives for the Diocese.

A Handbook for parish use was provided in 2018 and is available on the Diocesan website: www.gippsanglican.org.au/resources

In August 2019, Bishop in Council resolved that the Diocesan Finance Committee should identify and action further environmental initiatives and report to Bishop in Council. Since that resolution, the initiatives outlined above have been implemented.

Conclusion

The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland remains committed to caring for the environment and will actively continue to identify and adopt strategies to protect the environment into the future. This imperative particularly resonates with the Gippsland Diocese, situated in areas of increased bushfire risk due to climate change and the economic impacts of diminishing coal fired power production in the Latrobe Valley area.



Richard Connelly
Registrar
24 February 2022