

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE REPORT TO THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD - PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT CANON 2007

A motion was passed at the 2018 Anglican Diocese of Melbourne Synod which asked the Social Responsibilities Committee (SRC) to become the agent by which the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne would fulfil its reporting obligations under the 2007 Canon.¹

To help understand what parishes had been doing to reduce their environmental footprint, the SRC commissioned a simple survey in June 2019.²

Summary of results:

- A little under two-thirds of parishes (62.26 per cent) have undertaken some activity to reduce carbon footprint. Activities include changing lightbulbs, putting solar panels on churches and vicarages, reducing the use of paper and other consumables, and changing the heating and cooling systems of churches and vicarages to be more energy efficient.
- One-off activities mentioned were the use of a hybrid car for the vicar and the sharing of motor vehicles across parishes, a grey water system installed to use rain water collected for a toilet system, and changing the buying policy of the parish to use recycled products, if possible.
- Much work has to be done in raising the profile of both the Anglican Church of Australia's stated policy on the Environment (only one-third of parishes were aware – 32.08 per cent) and the Anglican Communion's Environment network (13.21 per cent).
- Much work can be done to raise the profile of the liturgical 'Creation Season' – 1 September to St Francis Day, 4 October – less than one-third of parishes (30.19 per cent) make use of this resource.
- While the range was from 0 per cent important to 100 per cent important – the average for our Diocese was 62 per cent – this means that reducing the environmental footprint is not a high priority for the majority of the Diocese, based on this survey.

The SRC noted the good work being done by some parishes and individuals in the Diocese but setting itself, via its Environment Sub-Committee, the task of raising awareness of the issues involved and providing resources that can be used by individuals and parishes in the Diocese to help reduce environmental footprints.

2020/2021 ACTIVITY:

Assured by a motion of support passed at the 2019 Synod, the SRC continued its work on drafting a new Diocesan Environment policy. With the arrival of COVID 19 in February/March 2020 many plans were shelved but members of the SRC were encouraged by a number of articles published in *The Melbourne Anglican* concerning care for the environment.

DECEMBER 2021 UPDATE

The Archbishop in Council passed a motion to establish a Renewable Energy Working Group to lead a project which will engage a consultant to assess the feasibility of each of the 209 ADOM sites for the inclusion of solar power and provide further analysis on a sample of 20 sites using NMI meter data, electricity bills, switchboard images and any further communications required to determine high level accurate costings of the proposed solar

power system. The deliverables will include a feasibility report with viability of solar on each of the 209 sites and a detailed analysis of 20 sites with accurate costings, return on investment, environmental impact, and extrapolated data for the entire ADOM. This analysis will include the following:

- Custom built webform for each Parish to upload their electricity bills
- Calculation of monthly and annual electricity consumption
- Calculation of each Parish's carbon footprint
- Calculation of the ADOM total power consumption and carbon footprint
- Required energy generation to become 100% carbon neutral for electricity consumption.

JANUARY 2022 UPDATE:

A successful webinar was held in May 2021, attended by 60 people from around the Diocese, and following from this several parishes have started using the 'Five-leaf Award'³ process to advance their work on reducing their carbon footprints. In late 2021, a draft Environment Diocesan Policy was forwarded on behalf of the SRC to the Archbishop for comment and review. This policy is being reviewed by the relevant bodies before it will be considered more formally by Archbishop-in-Council. An exciting development late in 2021 was the passing of a motion at the Archbishop-in-Council, which proposed sponsoring a project to examine current carbon emissions and investigate renewable energy infrastructure options for implementation with-in the diocese boundaries to contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions of Melbourne Anglican Trust Corporation-managed property used for its operations. This project will contribute to Australia's emissions reduction target while providing the Diocese and its member churches, organisations and affiliates opportunities for access to renewable energy opportunities.

In addition to the work of the SRC, the Diocese's investment body, Anglican Funds, committed in 2018 to an Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Policy, by which sustainable, ethical, and responsible investments are made. From an environmental standpoint, this is seen in Anglican Funds not investing in companies that generate more than 20% of total revenues from the extraction and/or production of fossil fuels, or where more than 20% of sales are from electricity derived from thermal coal power generation, or a combination thereof. Rather, Anglican Funds has committed 10% of its holdings to 'Impact Investing' – that is, making investments where a positive social and/or environmental outcome is achieved, in addition to financial returns. This has included a particular focus on investments in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and environmental conservation.

The Reverend Shane Hübner
Chair
Environment Sub-committee
Anglican Diocese of Melbourne Social Responsibilities Committee

¹ Environment Motion passed at 2018 Melbourne Synod

That Synod:

- a. requests Archbishop-in-Council to, through the agency of the Social Responsibilities Committee, make a report to the next meeting of General Synod to fulfil the Diocese of Melbourne's obligations, as required by s 3(1) of the General Synod Protection of the Environment Canon 2007 which will indicate progress being made in reducing our environmental impact, with particular emphasis on energy efficiency in order to minimise contributions to global warming;

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- b. encourages parishes to make use of standardised instruments such as the Parish Quick Carbon Self-Report instrument (available through the Public Affairs Commission - [https://www.anglican.org.au/data/Public Affairs Commission/2017 Parish Quick Carbon Self-report.pdf](https://www.anglican.org.au/data/Public%20Affairs%20Commission/2017%20Parish%20Quick%20Carbon%20Self-report.pdf)) in order to develop an internal reporting mechanism; and
- c. encourages parishes to consider the work of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) towards spiritually-inspired stewardship in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, in particular their Christian Climate Action Kit. (<https://www.arrcc.org.au/>).

² Seven questions in the survey:

- Has your parish in the last five years undertaken any activity to reduce its carbon footprint? If yes, please state what that activity(s) was/were. (Yes 62.26% No 37.74%)
- Has your parish liturgically celebrated 'Creation Season' (1 September to the Feast of St Francis 4 October)? (Yes 30.19% No 69.81%)
- Has your parish ever had in the last five years a sermon series on the topic of the environment? (Yes 41.51% No 58.49%)
- Is your parish aware of the Anglican Church of Australia's stated policy position on the environment (as outlined in the General Synod 2007 Canon on the Environment)? (Yes 32.08% No 67.92%)
- Is your parish aware of the Anglican Communion's Environment network? (Yes 13.21% No 86.79%)
- Is your parish aware of the Diocese of Melbourne's policy on the environment and climate change? (Yes 26.42% No 73.58%)
- How important is the issue of 'climate change' for your parish community? Would this change if there were appropriate resources and actions made available that could be used by members of the parish? – average of responses 62/100

³ [Five Leaf Eco-Awards | Ecumenical environmental change program for religious organisations \(fiveleafecoawards.org\)](http://fiveleafecoawards.org)