



## Anglican Views on Climate Change

*Canberra's Bishop GEORGE BROWNING is the Chair of the worldwide Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN). Last year, the ACEN declared that 'wilful destruction of the environment is a sin'. Some 22% of Australians belong to the Anglican Church of Australia. This report was compiled by the Climate Institute of Australia*

"As Chair of the international Anglican Communion Environmental Network, it was my privilege last year to host a gathering in Canberra of Anglican bishops from all over the world. My brother bishops and I gathered to reflect on the current impact and threat posed by climate change.

"Our delegates from Polynesia and Melanesia described how low-lying atolls in Tuvalu and Kiribati were experiencing coastal flooding and contamination of fresh water; our delegates from Kenya and the Philippines reported that due (in part) to rising temperatures, there was an increase in the range of mosquitoes, resulting in more widespread malaria; we heard that further melting of the tundra in Canada's frozen north could release catastrophic amounts of methane — an even more potent greenhouse gas than CO2.

"Delegates from Australia and Africa reported longer and more severe droughts, which, in the case of Kenya, were already affecting local food security, causing increased poverty and suffering. The storm activity in the US, Canada, Oceania and the Philippines severely affected vulnerable coastal populations. In Scandinavia (and much of northwest Europe) widespread and severe flooding has occurred since 2000.

"Holy Scripture reminds us that, the earth is the Lord's and everything in it (Psalm 24:1). All of creation belongs to God. We are part of the created order, and our first calling by God is to be stewards of the earth (Genesis 1:28 -29).

"So when we exploit God's creation to breaking point, we break the most fundamental commandment and selfishness, we knowingly cause the degradation of the world's ecosystems instead of protecting them. Wilfully causing environmental degradation is a sin.

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“The Christian faith is certainly about personal salvation. But it is more than that: Christianity is first a whole of the created order — biodiversity and business; politics and pollution; rivers, religion and rail brought everything of God into the sphere of time and space, and everything of time and space into meet together in Him: Jesus is the point of reconciliation.

“Therefore, if Christians believe in Jesus they must recognise that concern for climate change is no matter of faith. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, has warned that our continued failure to resolve economic injustices within and between societies will lead not only to environmental collapse. One of the Millennium Goals was to make poverty history by 2015, but unless we stop climate change it is an empty dream. Indeed without action now, we will assuredly make poverty permanent.

“Therefore, I ask Australians to:

- Take targeted and specific actions to assess and reduce our environmental footprint, particularly in the private sector. Such actions could include energy and resource audits, land management, just trading and pursuing responsible investment.
- Promote and commit ourselves to use renewable energy wherever possible, preferably by purchasing green energy from the grid.
- Turn off unnecessary electrical goods; reduce use of heating and air-conditioning; retrofit energy efficient light globes. Appliances on standby can use approximately 10 per cent of total electricity.
- Be aware of water usage. There are government rebates of up to \$500 for purchasing rainwater tanks and other water-saving devices. Appropriately used, grey water can save 20 per cent of a household's water usage.
- Press for urgent initiation of discussions leading to a just and effective development beyond the interests of all nations.
- Bring before governments the imperative to use all means, including legislation and regulation, to reduce greenhouse gases.

“It has been said that if the total world population enjoyed the same lifestyle as the most affluent in Australia, we would need seven Planet earths to sustain us.

“We are privileged to live in a wonderful world. We can abuse that privilege, or we can rise to the occasion and make the most of the presents. The potential for success — or failure — is both stark and global. God's grace has been poured out on our hearts. It is reflected in the bounty of the natural order. Let us cherish these gifts, and do our part to maintain the harmony and justice that we found it.”

Rt. Rev. GEORGE BROWNING is Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Chair of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, and a member of the Climate Change Task Force. The Anglican Church of Australia is part of the Anglican Communion, an international community of Anglicans in over 160 countries.

**The brief statement can be found [here](#)**

**For other faith's statements on the environment, please click [here](#)**

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