A Fair Deal for the Environment

OUR COMMON HOME

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

All forms of life – plant, animal and human – are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent.

The conservation of the earth’s resources is vital for our own and the planet’s survival.

Future generations have a right to inherit a healthily functioning and bio-diverse environment.

All elements of the environment have intrinsic value, irrespective of the extent to which they can be utilised by humans.

The water cycle is part of a broader ecosystem on which our food and industry depends and access to safe, clean water is a basic right for humans and other species.

There needs to be a balance between the priorities of environmental needs and social and economic costs.

Protection of environmental resources is fundamental to a healthy environment.

"What we are doing to the environment is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another."

— Chris Maser

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The limitations of the debate
The growth in material consumption is beyond the environmental limits of the earth

Dependence on Consumption
Australia, with the rest of the global west, is reliant on a snowballing consumption of resources.

Coal, Gas and Minerals
Despite the Paris Agreement, the Australian Government continues to support (through contracts, financial subsidies, and legislation), the coal, gas mineral industries. Currently, the Government gives annually over $7.7 billion to support the production and consumption of fossil fuels.

Environmental Destruction
• As the Adani mine seems set to proceed, the Great Barrier Reef is suffering the worst coral-bleaching event in its history.
• The devastating fires in Canada indicate the accelerating results of increasing extreme weather events.
• Waterways are being contaminated by run-off from businesses using chemically-based fertilisers and pesticides.
• The proposal that South Australia build a nuclear waste dump on Sacred Aboriginal land, encapsulates the priority of economics over the environment.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Australia currently has an economy that depends on an over-consumption of energy. We have the world’s highest average emissions per person.

Our current consumption of non renewable resources i.e. coal and oil, is increasing exponentially the rate of climate change.

This over-reliance on fossil fuels, and rising greenhouse gas emissions pollute the atmosphere and exacerbate climate change.

Australia is the world’s largest coal exporter, and if Adani goes ahead, it will have the largest mine.

Extreme weather events, increasing temperatures and droughts have serious social, economic and health consequences, including increasing displacement of populations.

Mining has taken water from rural supplies, contributed to pollution, and threatened rock structures, including aquifers.

New water coal-fired power stations are being planned and existing ones upgraded.

The privatisation of water supply has led to decreased water security and also removed government responsibility for an essential right.
WHAT DO WE WANT?

1. **Reduction of reliance on fossil and nuclear fuels** and conversion to renewable, cost-effective energy based on wind, solar and tidal technologies.

2. **Integration of legislation** which ensures strategic planning and development outcomes are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

3. **Regulation, better science and data collection**, and a more strategic, transparent approach to environmental issues.

4. **Restoration of healthy rivers** particularly the Murray-Darling system through co-operation between the Federal Government and other States to implement the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

5. **Greater water efficiency**
   - Technology used in sympathy with natural ecosystems - so that water is used several times without depriving its ecosystem uses
   - Continued retro-fitting of homes with water-efficient shower heads, toilets, tanks and recycled water.

6. **Guarantees that desalination** will not be used to meet supply needs when storage levels are above 30%.

7. **A moratorium imposed on Coal Seam Mining extraction** until a precautionary, considered and integrated strategy is developed – one which includes community consultation and independent scientific input.

WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

There are significant points of difference between the major parties. This is an area where voters can hope to influence policies:

**We can lobby candidates**
1. To commit to the removal of wasteful resources on subsidies and tax breaks for polluting industries towards clean renewable energy
2. To confirm the transition from fossil fuels to 100% renewable energy by 2050
3. To commit then to strategies of rapid emissions reduction and peaking by 2020, in order to keep the 1.5c limit within reach
4. To institute greater flows of finance, especially for adaptation and loss/damage
5. To call for fossil fuel divestment and reinvestment in renewables and low carbon solutions, both within our own communities, and by engaging companies on climate change.

WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY?

1. **Challenge the limitations of the jobs and growth mantra**
2. **Do an energy audit to find where energy consumption could be reduced**
3. **Contribute to cleaner water by not using cleaning products containing phosphates and chemicals**
4. **Expand the use of solar**
5. **Implement recycling and composting**
6. **At community events, replace disposable cups, plates and cutlery with washable or compostable items**
7. **Examine environmental efforts in your local community.**
8. **Encourage faith communities to reduce emissions and to support and stand in solidarity with communities already impacted by climate change.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

**The Climate Institute:**
www.climateinstitute.org.au

**Catholic Eartheare Australia:**
www.catholicearthcareoz.net

**Coal Seam Gas Mining**

**OzGreen**
www.ozgreen.org

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**Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude.**

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Pope Francis

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**A Project of Catholic Social Justice, Welfare and Educational Agencies**
14 Yerrick Rd Lakemba NSW 2195. Jan.Barnett@osj.org.au

Your voice strengthens our voice