

## ANGLICANS ADD VOICE TO CHORUS URGING GREATER CLIMATE RESPONSIBILITY

Mon 7 April 2014



Last month, three prominent Anglicans from this diocese joined faith leaders from the major religious traditions to urge Australians to act responsibly in the face of climate change. The faith leaders released an **open letter**, visited Members of Parliament and held a multi-faith prayer vigil outside the headquarters of the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA).



Signatories to the letter included Dr Beth Heyde, Chair of the Public Affairs Commission, Right Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard, Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, and Bishop George Browning, past convener of the Anglican Communion Environment Network. Other Anglican clergy were also involved in the advocacy and prayer vigil, organized by the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change.

In their open letter the faith leaders state: "All our religious traditions uphold the moral demand to act for the common good. To seek maximum individual or national advantage in the face of global warming is to increase the costs to those least advantaged in the human family as well as today's young people."

The faith leaders visited Environment Minister Greg Hunt, Shadow Minister Mark Butler and forty other Members of Parliament.

The lobbying coincided with the official release of the **Working Group II report of the UN Fifth Assessment Report** on March 28th. It shows how under-prepared the world is for climate impacts, and how urgent the need is to move away from our dependence on fossil fuels.

“As a relatively wealthy nation, Australia must make a choice,” said Bishop Pickard. “We could lead the world in renewable power generation and thus choose a path which protects the ecosystems which support life. Or we could continue our reliance on coal for our own short-term self-interest and condemn many millions of the world’s poor and our own children and grandchildren to an unthinkable future.”

The faith leaders were furthermore urging both major Parties to make large contributions to the United Nations Green Climate Fund to assist developing countries with their adaptation needs. The Working Group II report notes that 95 percent of deaths from extreme weather events occur in the developing world.

Of the Minerals Council of Australia and its member companies, Bishop Pickard said, “It is no longer morally acceptable to advance the interests of enterprises which are destroying the planet’s ecosystems. No short-term profits can justify it, no advantage on the stock markets, no matter how great, can make it alright.”

Professor Pickard joined others to hand-deliver a letter to the Chief Executive Officer of the MCA. The letter politely but firmly challenged the organization to stop its support for the mining of fossil fuels and instead throw its considerable weight behind renewables.

Bishop George Browning explained the network’s views more fully in *The Canberra Times*. Bishop George urged for more investment and support for alternative energy sources and asking, “will history record us as having been too self-indulgent to act for the future, or will history record us as having had the moral and intellectual courage to charter a sustainable course for ourselves and for future generations?”

By **Pamela Phillips**