

LOCAL ANGLICANS DISCUSS PUTTING YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

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In late May, many people will have seen news items about campaign actions at branches of the Commonwealth Bank.

Those actions were part of a movement that aims to remove the social licence for extraction and use of fossil fuels such as coal, fossil gas and oil that are cooking our climate and damaging local environments such as the Great Barrier Reef, water resources, and soil as well as local people's health and livelihoods.

Faith groups, including this Diocese, are part of that movement.

On Valentine's Day, two Canberra Anglicans took part in a facilitated discussion about faith leadership in investment. Beth Heyde and Gillian King were joined by members of other Australian faith groups that have decided to divest from fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas.

The audience was very interested in how Australian faith groups have approached decisions regarding divestment.

Zac Hatfield-Dodds, from the Uniting Church, outlined his experience with the Uniting Church ACT-NSW Synod's decision to become the first Australian faith group to decide to divest from fossil fuels. It is interesting to note that, in contrast to Anglican synods, Uniting Church synods make their decisions by consensus.

Beth Heyde, who worships at Holy Covenant Jamison, and is a member of the Public Affairs Commission of the General Synod, spoke about the Australian Anglican processes, including the divestment actions agreed by our Synod and others last year.

David Purnell explained how Canberra Quakers' decision to divest eventually lead to the Quakers' Yearly Meeting (the equivalent of national synod) in January deciding to move its corporate funds away from the 'big four' banks and encouraging individual members and meetings to move funds from investments that damage the Earth

Gillian King, who worships at St David's Red Hill, represented the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change. She fielded questions about the issue in the broader range of faith communities.

The discussion panel was one of a series of workshops that featured at DivestFest in Glebe Park. It was organised by the Canberra branch of 350.org Australia as part of Global Divestment Day. Josh Creaser, one of the organisers later said, 'I heard from many how impressive it was to see such a wide range of individuals and groups that are doing the hard work that makes the divestment movement so powerful.'

The quality of the discussion and depth of issues covered was really impressive. After the discussion, Gillian led a small prayer circle to pray for a safe climate and climate justice. They joined over 100,000 other people of faith around the world in interfaith prayer at noon (local time), part of Interfaith Power & Light's 5th Annual Preach-In on Global Warming.

By **Gillian King**