



This brochure is for Christians concerned by the growing impact of human induced climate change on our planet, its inhabitants and ecosystems—God’s creation—and by the need for justice for those people and environments that are most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

“We believe that God loves the divine creation and wills the development of its life. No creature is indifferent in the eyes of God. Each has its dignity and thereby also its right to existence.”

*The Rights of Nature and the Rights of Future Generations, Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly 1991.*



*Orange Alpine Xenica—climate change will destroy its habitat*



“Care for the environment and a keener ecological awareness have become key moral issues for the Christian conscience”

*from 'Let the Many Coastlines Be Glad!' a pastoral letter on the Great Barrier Reef by the Catholic Bishops of Queensland, 2004.*

This brochure is a joint initiative of UnitingJustice Australia, Catholic Earthcare Australia and the Australian Conservation Foundation, supported by the National Council of Churches Australia.



**CHANGING CLIMATE  
CHANGING CREATION**

Remaining a people of hope

## CREATION

The Genesis creation story paints a picture of God's creativity being poured out, step by step, day by day. Each day makes the next one possible and lays the perfect foundation for life on earth to unfold in all its abundance.

From the gases and vapour, dry land emerges, rocky and barren. From the sea, life is created and multiplies. The sun provides food for plants and keeps the planet at just the right temperature for the unfolding of life. With its blanket of cloud, the atmosphere holds in enough heat—and keeps out enough rays—to maintain life. God sees it all and it is good.

Into this complex world God calls animals and finally humans. We have thought of ourselves as the pinnacle of creation. But we do not, cannot, exist without all that has come before.



The National Council of Churches' statement, *Sustaining Creation*, affirms that Christians in Australia can and should be a major force for change towards sustainable development, sustainable communities and a healthy environment.

*Sustaining Creation* emphasises the interrelatedness of all life—and of so many of the world's problems. "Exploitation and greed, the consequent poverty of human communities, displacement of people, environmental degradation all impact on each other," the statement says. "It is not possible to tackle one without attempting to tackle another. Certainly, these matters are political issues. They are economic issues. But at a deeper level, they are much more. At their core, they constitute a spiritual and moral crisis, touching all that we hold sacred."

### The statement calls for a change in spirit, attitude and actions.

"Development is not sustainable if it steals from present and future generations. Poverty and environmental degradation are interwoven, and it is the poor who suffer most from this degradation. Sustainable development cannot be defined in economic terms alone, but must begin in a commitment to care for the poor, the marginalised, and the voiceless. We seek a sustainable community."

*from Sustaining Creation, a statement of the National Council of Churches in Australia to the governments of Australia, 2002 (available at [www.ncca.org.au](http://www.ncca.org.au))*



**"The situation is serious and demands our attention, but it is not hopeless"**

*Prof Ian Lowe, President, Australian Conservation Foundation*

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Write to or visit your local or Federal Member of Parliament, expressing your concern about these issues and asking what they are doing to address them.
- Find out more about reducing your energy and water usage and waste at home and what you can do to help tackle big issues like climate change (see the *GreenHome* pages at [www.acfonline.org.au](http://www.acfonline.org.au) or call 1800 332 510).
- Take action in your church and small group (prayer and other liturgical resources are available from the Uniting Church's Victorian and Tasmanian Environment Project Officer phone 03 9657 5365 or visit [www.catholicearthcareoz.net](http://www.catholicearthcareoz.net) or [nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice](http://nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice) for practical and spiritual ideas).

## WHAT CAN THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DO?

Our children and our families need governments to adopt environmental policies that do not steal from present and future generations.

- urgently ratify the Kyoto Protocol and work cooperatively with other nations to set targets to avoid dangerous climate change.
- set new targets and timetables for increased use of renewable energies.
- increase spending on infrastructure that encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

## CLIMATE

While climate change is a natural phenomenon, greenhouse pollution from human activities is causing a dramatic and almost unprecedented rate of change. Global temperatures are 0.7° higher on average than they were 100 years ago. Oceans are getting warmer and sea levels are rising, bleaching coral reefs and threatening some of our low-lying Pacific neighbours. Droughts, floods and severe storms are becoming more frequent and billions of people are at risk from increasing water shortages.

Australia is very vulnerable to climate change. A 2°C increase in global temperature would severely damage the Great Barrier Reef, the Kakadu wetlands and the alpine regions of south eastern Australia. Heat waves alone are projected to kill an extra 1,000 people in Melbourne every year by 2050, while climate change could see millions of Australians threatened by such tropical diseases as dengue fever. Unless we make significant cuts to greenhouse pollution, Australians will suffer from more extreme weather events, public health risks and the loss of some of our great natural treasures.