



# Churches mark Earth Overshoot Day for 2020



Churches are coming together to toll their bells and hold prayer services to mark Earth Overshoot Day. The tolling bells will warn demise for God's Creation as we know it on Earth – if we do not repent but instead continue down the destructive path that we have been following.

This year Earth Overshoot Day will fall on 22 August. To maximise publicity about this solemn milestone day, **church bells will toll shortly before midday on Friday 21 August to alert people to Earth Overshoot Day** the next day.

## What is Earth Overshoot Day?

[Earth Overshoot Day](#) is the day when humanity's demands for ecological resources (fresh water, fish, forests, etc), exceeds what the Earth can renew in a year.

This is driven by our attitudes and disconnect towards the Earth, our common home that God created and entrusted to our care. Collectively, we are overconsuming, overexploiting and de-stabilising God's Creation. This has upset its delicate balances and recovery processes. We see this in increasingly 'unprecedented' fires, drought and extreme weather.

Yet our changed behaviour – even for a short time – to stop COVID-19 spreading has pushed back the date of Earth Overshoot Day this year by about three weeks. This does not mean we can relax, though. The window for [avoiding catastrophic consequences from damage to our climate continues to close rapidly](#). We are also driving [mass extinction of species](#) and [breakdown of the integrity of our common home](#).

## Why do we need to change our attitudes and behaviour?

These unfolding climate and ecological crises – and [COVID-19](#) – are tragic warning signs of our broken relationship with God's Creation and our loss of understanding our interrelationship with all living things and the physical environment that enables life. Australians are some of the biggest contributors to this problem: if everyone behaved like us, humanity would consume the equivalent of over 4 Earths each year!

## Why is it important to mark Earth Overshoot Day?

As Christians, we can mark Earth Overshoot Day to raise it in the public consciousness and create a call for transformation of our attitudes and actions. This is why we are joining together to toll our bells and hold prayer services. Ultimately, as both Popes St John Paul II and Francis and former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams have said, we need an individual and collective "ecological conversion". That will enable us to repair our relationship with God and with Creation. And that will enable us to repair our relationship with the life-support systems on earth so that the physical and life systems of the Earth can renew and life as we know it can continue.

## What can I do to help on Earth Overshoot Day?

**Commit to mark Earth Overshoot Day by joining together with other Christians to toll our bells and hold prayer services:**

1. [Sign up online](#) to join in and receive support such as a short liturgy, images and further inspiration.
2. **Toll** your church bells shortly before midday on Friday 21 August as an alert to Earth Overshoot Day. (Or you could mark it by lighting a candle and doing actions 2-4 below.)
3. **Pray** for people to see the ecological crises in our midst and for "ecological conversion."

[www.overshootday.org](http://www.overshootday.org)