



## Media Release

### Cathedral bells toll for Earth Overshoot Day

**Monday, 29 July, 2019**

The bells will toll at St John's Cathedral in Brisbane – and around Australia - today signifying a climate emergency for **Earth Overshoot Day**, serving as a rallying call for residents to make some everyday changes to their behaviours to help slow catastrophic environmental degradation.

In an Australian-first initiative, the Cathedral bells will toll for 12 minutes this morning signifying the 12 years the world community has to avoid irreversible climate change - as warned last year by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Another report in May by the United Nations (the most comprehensive report yet on the state of global ecosystems) said that up to one million plant and animal species face extinction, many within decades, because of human activities.

Australia is one of the largest contributors to the global footprint (based on per capita consumption), ranking only second in the world behind the United States. Ironically and unenviably, Australia was world number one before being overtaken by the US this year.

The Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt, Dean of St John's Cathedral, said most Australians were over-consuming and over-exploiting the earth's resources and today's event was important to raise the public awareness of the problem and to call on people to make changes to help stop the world reaching a tipping point.

"The church bells will ring out from 11.48am until noon at four Anglican churches in Brisbane— St John's Cathedral in the city, Holy Trinity in Fortitude Valley, St Mary's Kangaroo Point and St Andrew's at Indooroopilly," Dean Catt said.

"Another six Anglican Cathedrals around Australia will also be ringing their bells at the same time in Hobart, Adelaide, Bendigo, Bunbury, Grafton, and Wangaratta.

"It's absolutely critical that people realise that the bells are tolling for the planet and that they signal the potential destruction of Earth as we know it.

"It's not impossible to change course however it needs leadership by governments and conscious choices by individuals in our everyday lives.

“We want the Queensland and Federal Governments to stop the hands-off or do-nothing approach to environmental policies and to champion and introduce stronger legislation that encourages reducing plastic packaging, recycling and an accelerated switch to renewable energy.

“At the individual level, the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) is promoting a climate-conserving lifestyles campaign, [Living the Change](#).

“Everyday residents, who might feel powerless to make a difference can make a long-term commitment in three areas of daily behaviour – transport, home energy use, and diet – which will lead to more sustainable lifestyles.

“It could be simple things like reducing food waste at home, eating less meat, poultry and fish; buying local produce; walking or using public transport; reduce your energy use by switching to LED bulbs or minimise the use of air conditioning.”

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC)\*\*President Thea Ormerod said people could take up more low-carbon ways of living but tended to look instead to governments, business or innovators to find solutions.

“The time to act is now. Climate change and environmental degradation are a profoundly moral issue, therefore we have a responsibility to care for the ecosystems on which life depends,” Ms Ormerod said.

“As well as individual action, a moral collective response should involve the urgent scaling up of energy generation from renewable sources and the phasing out of coal, oil and fossil gas, both as domestic fuel sources and as exports.”

Rev David Baker, moderator of the Uniting Church in Australia (Queensland Synod) called on the Queensland Government to urgently develop quality plans for a faster transition for the state economy.

“All of us now, and future generations, will benefit from a transformed economy, so governments need to take the lead to ensure the short term burdens of transition are equitably distributed,” said Rev Baker.

As well as the tolling of the bells this morning, a special noon service will be held at St John’s Cathedral, Brisbane where Dean Catt will say a liturgy for Earth Overshoot Day. All are invited to attend.

\*\*ARRCC is a multi-faith, member-based organisation of people from around Australia who are committed to taking action on climate change.

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**TEN TOP TIPS TO CHANGE YOUR BEHAVIOUR, HELP REDUCE CONSUMPTION (AND SAVE MONEY!!)**

**TRANSPORTATION:**

- Walk or use public transport for local errands
- Use public transport to work– swap your car trip for a bus/train/CityCat trip even one day a week
- Consider buying an electric vehicle (they could be cheaper than petrol/diesel cars by 2022).

**ENERGY:**

- Replace your light bulbs with energy-efficient LED bulbs
- Wash clothes in cold water

**FOOD:**

- Reduce food waste in the home (and save on your weekly grocery bill)
- Halve the number of weekly meals with meat/fish/poultry
- Gradually move to a plant-based diet (start your own veggie/herb garden)

**CLOTHING:**

- Reduce new clothing purchases (buy brands that are sustainably made) and look for a pre-loved bargain from Op Shops

**MONEY:**

- Invest ethically (look for companies which operate sustainably). Consider where your super money and share investment goes.

**NOTE: To download Earth Overshoot Day media infographics, click on this web page:**

<https://www.overshootday.org/newsroom/infographics/>