



Anglican Diocese of Rockhampton Environmental Commission

Report to Synod - 2009

At the 2008 Synod we voted to adopt an Environmental Canon which came to us from the 2007 General Synod. The Canon encourages our Diocese, Parishes, and individual Anglican Christians to become more aware of the environments in which we live, and some of the issues that face those environments. It also encourages all Anglican institutions, organizations and individuals to become better stewards of energy, water and land. At the 15th General Synod, next year, each Diocese in Australia will have to give feedback to the ways that the Canon has been explored and implemented.

In January 2009 a letter from two members of our Environmental Commission was sent to all members of the 2008 Synod. It was intended to remind Parishes about the Canon, and invite feedback from Parishes that would be gathered in a display at the 2009 Synod. The letter also gave details of how to participate in 2009 Clean-Up Australia Day activities.

To date, the feedback received demonstrates a mixture of intentional stewardship and a developing awareness of local environment. With the installation of water tanks and split system toilets people have sought to be better stewards of water. With the installation of solar systems, compact fluorescent bulbs and energy monitors we have sought to be better stewards of electrical energy. Clearly, we have started the journey... but there is a long way to go.

Some people have questioned the need to be aware of plant and animal species in their local environment and this has been a great opportunity to discuss a new perspective on the call to *'love our neighbour'*. If we are willing to consider the local environment as one of our *'neighbours'*, I think there may develop a desire to know the names and characteristics of this *'neighbour'*? This is not new thinking but is grounded in the Christ-centred spirituality of St Francis of Assisi who thought of various flora and fauna as *'brothers and sisters'*.

What could be realistic environmental goals for our Diocese to achieve in the sixteen months before the next General Synod? We offer some ideas to *'prime the pump'* and would welcome feedback from Parishes and members of Synod:

"An environmental audit of Diocesan properties, followed by an intentional response to be better stewards of energy, water, and waste in the light of the audit recommendations? A celebration of the diverse responses to the environment within our Diocese: worm farms, composting, water tanks, solar energy, bush walking, Land Care, partnerships with other organizations; new Psalms grounded in the daily realities and environments of Central Queensland, new liturgies, locally written prayers, and audio-visual worship resources that reflect the landscapes, flora, fauna and people of our region?"

Canon Cameron Venables
Anglican Parish of North Rockhampton

Dr Ed Charmley
CSIRO-Rockhampton Team Leader