



## Responding to Climate Change Consequences

Over the past ten years the environmental crisis has deepened. While action is being taken all over the world to reduce emissions and address the causes of climate change, an increase in average temperatures of 1.5° is already ‘locked in’. Unless the scale of action to halt or reverse change is expanded significantly, there is a good chance temperatures will continue to rise and the impacts that are already being felt will worsen.

Because of Sydney’s geographic position and relative wealth (on global terms), we are likely to be sheltered from many of the worst direct impacts, however we will be called on individually and corporately to respond to climate change on many levels in the short and long term. While climate change presents many challenges, the church is well positioned to bring its gifts and message to a world in crisis. On the practical front, the church’s outward facing orientation, networks, relationship with local communities and property resources are all opportunities to serve and connect with our neighbours. More importantly, the message of the Gospel is one of hope that informs and transcends our current troubles. Our witness of care and compassion for this world can be a powerful signpost to our hope for the next.

The table below outlines some of the climate change consequences we are likely to have to deal with in the near future. It is divided into three categories. First are the immediate physical impacts on property. Second are impacts which arise out of the first category. The final, and largest, section are the impacts on people – ranging from those within our church family, to our immediate neighbours, our fellow Australians and then the international community. These impacts are not confined to the current generation either but anticipate impacts on those following us in history.

Immediate impacts on property	
<p>Extremity of weather events is likely to increase – stronger storm winds, hail, higher and more frequent flooding, sea level surges, more fires and fiercer fires, with the concomitant impact on property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure your properties are kept in good condition – make repairs as they become necessary.</li> <li>• Know the risks around your local area ie clear vegetation around buildings in fire prone areas and install rainwater tanks with pumps and hoses;</li> <li>• review the Flood Proofing and Storm Proofing guides from the ACPT</li> <li>• Consider preparing to volunteer during emergencies – ie State Emergency Services (SES) train volunteers - <a href="https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/get-involved/volunteer/">https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/get-involved/volunteer/</a>,</li> <li>• Anglicare prepare volunteers to respond to people in crisis – email <a href="mailto:disasterrecovery@anglicare.org.au">disasterrecovery@anglicare.org.au</a> for more information</li> </ul>



<b>Affiliated impacts</b>	
Decline in the value of property	
<p><b>Insurance</b>          “A 2018 study found that 38% of insurance companies now consider climate change to be a core business issue”  <i>Climate Change and the Insurance Industry: Taking Action as Risk Managers and Investors The Geneva Association, Jan 2018</i></p> <p>“IAG and Suncorp, two of Australia's biggest insurers, reported falls in half-year profit in February, and in both cases extreme weather events were a major factor. Insurance brokerage Steadfast, announcing its own results, predicted an increase in extreme weather events would push insurance premiums up for at least another two years.”  <i>Financial Review 24 Feb, 2019</i></p>	<p>Rises in insurance costs impact parishes, as the cost of Diocesan insurance for parish properties is part of the parish cost recoveries charged each month.</p> <p>The insurance industry is also now warning that families may not be able to afford property insurance for their homes. In case of damage to property caused by natural disasters, the costs of recovery for uninsured properties may be taken up by the taxpayer through government disaster recovery schemes.</p> <p>The worst case scenario for these families is that they will be left with unsafe homes and no resources for repairs – and seeking help from family, friends and in their local communities.</p>
<b>Social impacts</b>	
<p>The social impacts of climate change are likely to be highly significant, though initially the worst will be felt in countries that are geographically distant to Australia. As the impacts increase over time it will be younger people and future generations that will need to respond to the demands of a changed world. A critical question for the Church will be ‘what does it mean to be Christian right now in the face of these international and intergenerational injustices and how should we respond to the social consequences?’</p> <p>These impacts may emerge in the following categories within Australia:</p>	
<p>Health impacts – reduced air quality; the risk to the aged, very young and otherwise vulnerable people of extreme heat and cold; changing rates of occurrence of infectious diseases as zones that are hospitable to diseases expand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could your church buildings be used as a community centre - a gathering place for people to share heating or cooling resources during extreme weather?</li> <li>• Perhaps consider making alternate plans for your meeting space on days of temperature extremes – if possible choose a space that is easier to cool or heat for your church service.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise your congregation member to make wise decisions about whether to stay away from church gatherings if they are unwell.</li> </ul>
<p>Climate anxiety and grief – “Many people may also feel seriously concerned, frightened, angry, pessimistic, or guilty in response to climate change. Qualitative research finds evidence of some people being deeply affected by feelings of loss, helplessness, and frustration due to their inability to feel like they are making a difference in stopping climate change. New terms such as ‘eco-anxiety’, ‘climate change anxiety’, are sometimes used to describe this.”</p> <p><a href="https://www.psychology.org.au/About-Us/What-we-do/advocacy/Advocacy-social-issues/Environment-climate-change-psychology/Resources-for-Psychologists-and-others-advocating/Climate-change-and-health">https://www.psychology.org.au/About-Us/What-we-do/advocacy/Advocacy-social-issues/Environment-climate-change-psychology/Resources-for-Psychologists-and-others-advocating/Climate-change-and-health</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People within and beyond the church will often seek help for grief from their local minister. Consider how you might resource your minister or other pastoral workers to respond to climate anxiety and grief. <a href="https://www.eternitynews.com.au/australia/helping-pastors-alleviate-climate-anxiety-the-cold-war-of-our-times/">https://www.eternitynews.com.au/australia/helping-pastors-alleviate-climate-anxiety-the-cold-war-of-our-times/</a></li> <li>• Create opportunities for parishioners to talk about their feelings in relation to climate change.</li> </ul>
<p>Essential services – increase in costs for electricity, water, gas supply; failure of electricity, gas or water supply; failure of sewerage services. Communication breakdown.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider creating an emergency response plan for your parish that anticipates your church becoming a gathering place for the local community in a crisis.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Recovery Handbook</a> – Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub</li> </ul>
<p>Food and water insecurity – the reduction in range, quantity and quality of available food. Water shortages. Increases in the costs of obtaining both food and water.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the installation of water tanks a priority for all your church buildings.</li> <li>• A community garden may be a great way to reach into your community, share gardening experience and knowledge, and build local capacity for food production</li> </ul>
<p>Increased social stratification – Widening divide between the wealthy and poor leading to social unrest and extreme poverty. Vulnerable communities are likely to experience the worst of this,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Archbishop’s Anglican Aid</a> supports many projects both within and outside Australia aimed at supporting vulnerable people. You can support Anglican Aid’s projects financially, or take a look at volunteering opportunities in their programs as well.</li> </ul>



<p>particularly Aboriginal and refugees communities.</p>	
<p>Influx of displaced people from climate affected countries – through regularised migration or ‘illegal’ border incursions (the UN does not currently recognise climate as a contributor to refugee status, although the cause of many current refugees may be attributed to climate change induced social and political stressors).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider joining a Christian advocacy group like <a href="#">Common Grace</a> or <a href="#">Love Makes A Way</a></li> <li>• Support the <a href="#">GAFCON Sustainable Development Network</a></li> </ul>

<p><b>General Resources</b></p>	
<p><b>Five Leaf Eco awards</b> - an Australian ecumenical environmental change program specifically designed for churches and religious organisations.</p>	<p>Even if you aren’t keen on earning an award, this website is full of ideas of actions a church can take to respond to climate change. <a href="https://fiveleafecoawards.org/">https://fiveleafecoawards.org/</a></p>
<p><b>Christ the cross and creation care conference</b> - A Rocha is a Christian nature conservation organisation, our name coming from the Portuguese for ‘the Rock’, as the first initiative was a field study centre in Portugal. A Rocha projects are frequently cross-cultural in character, and share a community emphasis, with a focus on science and research, practical conservation and environmental education.</p>	<p>Recordings of sessions from their 2019 Australian conference are here: <a href="https://australia.arocha.org/news/christ-the-cross-and-creation-care-conference-sydney/">https://australia.arocha.org/news/christ-the-cross-and-creation-care-conference-sydney/</a> Speakers are lecturers from Moore College, SMBC, Morling and Christ College, with a panel session at the end.</p>
<p>Davies, Glenn N. ‘Sabbath and ecology’, <i>St Mark’s Review</i>, No. 212 May 2010 (2)</p>	<p>“The restoration of all things, of course, is part of God’s purposes for the world in Christ. Yet that does not absolve humankind from caring for the creation until the end. There is a moral imperative for humans, especially Christians, to care for the earth. While they know that the form of this world is passing away (1 Corinthians 7:31; 1 John 2:17), it is God’s world that he has given us to enjoy and to preserve. Moreover, God will bring judgment upon the earth and its inhabitants for their abuse of the gifts of God’s creation (2 Peter 3:7).”</p>





<p>Stead, Michael R. 'To 'rule over' and 'subdue' the creation', <i>St Mark's Review</i>, No. 212 May 2010 (2)</p> <p><i>Both St Mark's review articles available to purchase (\$8.00) as a download from</i></p> <p><a href="https://search.informit.com.au/browsePublication;py=2010;res=IELHSS;issn=0036-3103;iss=212">https://search.informit.com.au/browsePublication;py=2010;res=IELHSS;issn=0036-3103;iss=212.</a></p>	<p>"Genesis 1:26–28 calls on us to recognise God as the ruler of this world, who has put us in charge of this creation as his stewards, to tend and care for it, and to whom we will one day give an account. We may need to repent of attitudes of cruelty to his creatures or indifference to his creation, and to repent of insatiable greed which has fuelled excessive consumption to the detriment of our environment. We need to do our bit to be part of the solution to the problems of our planet, as part of the responsibilities of Christian stewardship. And, finally, we should praise the God who has given us this bounteous planet for our needs, and seek to share with justice the resources of the world with all peoples."</p>
<p><b>"Is God Green?"</b></p>	<p><a href="#">The Pastor's Heart</a> – Interview with Lionel Windsor, author of <i>Is God Green?</i></p>

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