



# ARRCC

## Australian Religious Response to Climate Change

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2009

### FIRST CANBERRA INTERFAITH CLIMATE LOBBY

Australia's first Interfaith Climate Delegation of Religious Leaders to Canberra will today meet with senior politicians to highlight the economic and moral imperative for stronger climate action.

Leaders of Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist faiths will be calling on all Australian political leaders to strengthen targets to reduce emissions and to help developing countries prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

The faith leaders from around Australia say there is deep rooted concern among their communities about climate change, particularly the impacts on the poorest countries and communities who have little responsibility for the problem.

Sister Geraldine of Catholic Religious Australia, who worked on the Pacific Island of Kiribati for four years, said developed countries were responsible for three quarters of carbon pollution in the atmosphere and had an historical and moral responsibility to act. "People on Islands in the Pacific enjoy little of the conveniences of industrialization and contribute a fraction to global emissions, yet are subject to imminent loss of land, culture and identity," said Sister Geraldine.

Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins, of Emanuel Synagogue, Woollahra, is Australia's most Senior Rabbi and Chair of the Council of Progressive Rabbis of Australia, New Zealand. "Each of us must accept full responsibility for our choices and their consequences, and that we have a moral obligation to sustain and preserve life for generations to come." said Rabbi Kamins.

Thea Ormerod, Chair of Australian Religious Response to Climate Change and co-ordinator of the delegation, said faith communities were now engaging in a higher level with the issue of climate change. "The foundation of all the great religions were built upon us being custodians and caring for the earth. Australia and other developed countries need to address their historical responsibility for climate change by committing to strong pollution reduction targets and significant financing to assist poorer countries sustainable development and preparation for the unavoidable impacts of climate change."

Also in the delegation are Br. Ikebal Patel, President of Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Mr. Kanti Jinna - Vice Chairman Hindu Council of Australia and Venerable Sujato Bhikkhu – Executive Buddhist Council of NSW and Rev. Professor James Haire AM - Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.

The delegation is urging all parties to support carbon pollution reduction targets of 25% to 40% off 1990 levels by 2020 and for Australia to provide substantial funds, through private and public financing mechanisms – to help developing countries adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

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