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PHOTO: Coalseam Conservation Park, WA in September 2016 (ABC News: Chris Lewis)

'cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor'

Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) has chosen 'cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor' (*Laudato Si'* 49) as the theme of this year's celebration of the Season of Creation which begins 1 September with the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and concludes on 4 October, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. This issue of *Watermark* also looks to the next global climate meeting.

Pacific Nations lead way to COP 23

The 2017 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference will take place from 6 to 17 November in Bonn, Germany, the seat of the Climate Change Secretariat. Known as COP 23, the conference will be convened under the Presidency of Fiji.

COP23 comes at a time there is a need to renew pressure for environmental action to meet targets and look at how to hold world leaders accountable for the commitments made in the Paris climate accord.

Globally the Paris Climate Agreement commits all nations to work together to keep warming **as far below 2°C** as possible and **achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions** (a balance between what we emit and carbon dioxide that might be captured through reforestation and other processes) before the end of the century.

Preparatory work for COP23 by civil society groups is about initiatives and strategies to **promote climate justice** in the current global, regional and local political and economic environments - through just policies, environmental laws, human rights - given the urgent need to support a rapid transition to a decarbonised economy.

Take the Laudato Si' Pledge

Signing the *Laudato Si'* pledge [here](#) is one action that can be undertaken in preparation for the Season of Creation from **1 September to 4 October 2017**.

The pledge is asking people to commit to:

- praying with and for creation
- living more simply, and
- advocating for our common home.

As an ecumenical action, Christians are encouraged to join together to host prayer services that incorporate a symbolic action and are held at a location where you can "hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" during the Season.

Fiji was the first country in the world to ratify the Paris Agreement

"While this agreement was probably the best we could negotiate among so many countries, we must remain very clear-headed about the fact that our work is just beginning. An agreement is only as good as its implementation, and it will be up to us to make sure that all nations live up to this agreement."

Fiji Minister Voreqe Bainimarama, Paris 2015

Local leaders for a global problem

Although President Trump has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Agreement, many cities in the US (and in Australia) are taking climate change matters into their own hands.

In 2014, the world's population passed a significant milestone – for the first time, more than half of humanity (54%) resided in urban areas. This proportion is expected to increase to more than two thirds by 2050.

Urban areas do more than their fair share of contributing to the climate change problem, accounting for over two thirds of global energy demand and around three quarters of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.

Transforming the way energy is used and generated in cities and towns worldwide has the potential to deliver 70% of the total emissions reductions needed to stay on track for the 2°C limit set under the Paris Agreement – compared to expected emissions based on policies currently in place.

More than 350 US mayors responded to the President's decision by committing to reaching 100% renewable energy for their communities by 2035. Further, a group of mayors, state governments and companies from the United States are preparing a plan to meet the United States' Paris emissions reductions targets in the absence of federal government commitment.

In the face of ongoing chaos in national level climate policy, several Australian states are forging ahead with ambitious renewable energy targets. But local governments are also rising to the low carbon challenge, described in the latest report from the Climate Council of Australia, *["Local leadership: tracking local government progress on climate change"](#)*.

Many smaller regional centres are displaying similar ambition, with one in five councils surveyed across Australia aiming for "100% renewable energy" or "zero emissions".

Thinking globally, acting locally, has never been a more relevant aspiration.

[Reference: Professor Lesley Hughes at <http://johnmenadue.com/lesley-hughes-solving-the-climate-crisis-one-city-at-a-time/>]

Implementing the Paris Agreement

There are two mechanisms under the Paris Agreement that are a focus for the Pacific Region to build climate-resilient and equitable societies.

These are 'climate finance' and 'loss and damage'.

The intention of the **climate finance** facility is to scale up financial contributions and technology transfer by affluent and industrialised countries that are mainly responsible for climate change in order to begin to recompense their "ecological debt" to Pacific peoples.

For former Kiribati President Anote Tong, the key test is to see "how committed wealthy countries are to providing the promised funds."

Australia is taking climate funding from the aid budget without making any "new and additional" commitments at a time when Australia's overseas aid is at the lowest level for decades.

Under '**loss and damage**' the intention is to address irreversible loss and destruction due to climate change of homes, lands and Indigenous ways of living.

"The loss or destruction of your homeland, for instance, cannot be measured," says Rev Henrik Grape of the World Council of Churches.

"How do we as churches play a healing role and let the voices of the affected be heard? How can our faith communities become cradles of a hope that grows?"

"Together faith communities have to be relentless in reminding the world that the climate crisis is a moral issue.

"We need to continue to deepen multi-faith relations not least in a context such as Fiji, with at least 30 percent of the population identifying as Hindu," says Grape.



SEASON OF CREATION

PRAYER AND ACTION MONTH

From September 1 to October 4, Christians around the world are praying and caring for creation. It's the "Season of Creation" celebrated by Christian churches around the globe.

We're uniting with one purpose: to steward the Earth.

Let's focus attention on our use of plastics

Some hints compiled by Elizabeth Cranfield, Loreto Normanhurst

What soft plastics to recycle?

Remember you can reduce your landfill contributions by recycling "soft" plastics, including pasta packaging, bread bags, broken "green" bags, chip packets etc through RedCycle at your local Coles supermarket.

See <http://www.redcycle.net.au/> for more and about what plastics you can recycle with them – it's not limited to the recycling of grocery bags or packaging from Coles food, as Coles doesn't own or operate the company!

There is currently only so much demand for the products that RedCycle manufacture, however, reducing your consumption of plastic packaging is still preferable.

Be aware that bags labelled as degradable are not *biodegradable*, so do not breakdown into nutrients in the soil/landfill, but are rather designed to fragment into tiny pieces.

Alternatives to Plastic Bin Liners

If your council is agreeable to you to putting all landfill waste into your bin without containing it in some form, you can just eliminate a liner – get into the habit of washing the bin regularly. If you are unlikely to wash the bin out regularly, or if your council requires rubbish to be contained by something you can use newspaper. See this video for [how to make a newspaper bin liner](#).

Alternatives to plastic bags when shopping

Large items: such as apples, potatoes etc can be piled up on the conveyor belt and put straight into your reusable bag. If this causes embarrassment, then head to the self-serve area and build carrot/apple/potato pyramids on the scales! Or, bag them up in reusable produce bags: [reusable produce bags](#).

Or make your own bag from very lightweight fabric using a simple drawstring bag pattern, or use net bags designed for washing delicates/lingerie. Whilst many of these are made from synthetic materials, the fact that they are reusable makes them a far better alternative to plastic produce bags.

Small items: such as beans and snowpeas can be temporarily put in your reusable bag so they don't fall through the trolley/basket and then transfer to the conveyor belt/scales as above, or you could use a paper mushroom bag – be sure to let the cashier know that they're not mushrooms ☺. Better than the mushroom bag option would be to use the reusable produce bags mentioned above.

New technologies for plastic production

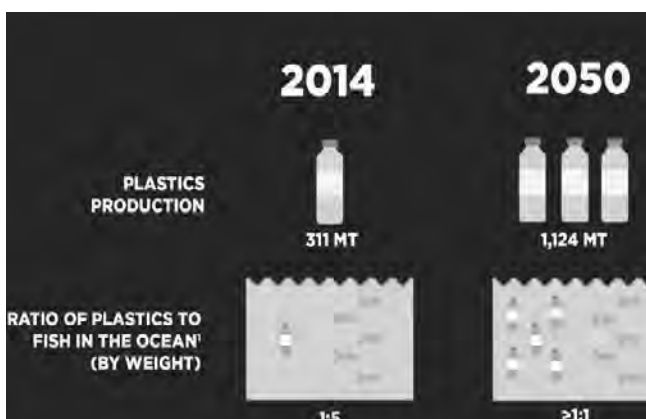
"Carbon negative plastics are at the very early stages of development. I think that we don't know what the potential of using CO² to create plastics means yet.

Apart from the fact that we won't be using fossil fuels to make plastics, we will be turning a problem into a solution by taking some CO² out of the air.

Now whether we use those plastics wisely or whether we throw them away into the oceans is a matter for us and our society's response.

The technology itself won't solve that problem simply by sourcing the raw materials in a better way."

(Professor Tim Flannery AO speaking at **OUR CLIMATE FUTURE** seminar, 16 July 2017 – download CCJP seminar report [here](#))



Tips to (food) waste not

Australia wastes \$20 billion worth of food each year, **half** of it from households.

Home fridges are the focus of a new campaign by food rescue charity **OzHarvest**.

Bread, milk, meat, green vegetables and bananas are the most 'chucked out.'



THINK about what's in your fridge and plan your meals

EAT what you have in the fridge and freeze what you don't need

SAVE precious food, time and money

Simple A to Z tips for storing & using food

Remove the outer leaves from a limp old lettuce and put lettuce into cold water to revive it. Then add it to soup or stir-fry it.

Be a food saver and help reduce food waste in your home

[\(Click here to download a PDF version of the tips\)](#)

Make delicious food with your leftovers

Any left-over green things from the fridge can go into lentil dhal.

And everyone who has cooked for children will know that any number of vegetables can go into (that is, be hidden in!) savoury mince and Bolognese sauce.

[\(Click here for delicious 'Wasty' recipes to make with your leftovers\)](#)

To watch

There Once Was an Island (2011) is a film that documents people living on the remote Takuu Atoll of the Pacific Ocean as they attempt to deal with the impact of rising seas on their 600-strong island community.

Use for discussions about culture, displaced communities, democracy, adaptation, conservation, and human rights; and to consider the immediacy of climate change and its cultural, political and environmental impacts, now and into the future.

Watch via YouTube (57 minutes)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8_P842Y_Wk

To read

The Meaning of Existence

Poem by Les Murray

Everything except language
knows the meaning of existence.
Trees, planets, rivers, time
know nothing else. They express it
moment by moment as the universe.

Even this fool of a body
lives it in part, and would
have full dignity within it
but for the ignorant freedom
of my talking mind.

Text as published in *Poems the Size of Photographs*
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004).

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