



PHOTO: Strathfield 2135 skyline (EM Stone)

Living sustainably and being change

This issue of *Watermark* looks at putting into practice the principles of sustainable living and environmental sustainability. After a successful presentation to the Business Managers' Meeting of CLRI (NSW), we feature Deirdre Gardiner rsm and Chris Hill of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea who share their approaches to environmental sustainability across the Institute.

Divestment can be done

Approximately 60 Catholic institutions to date, in Europe and in Argentina, Australia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and South Africa, have made public their plans to partially or fully disinvest from the fossil fuels industry. Faith groups account for approximately a quarter of all divestment commitments overall, which since the fossil-free movement gained steam in 2012 has animated an estimated **US\$5 trillion away from oil, coal and gas companies**.

Forty institutions from 11 countries on five continents announced 3 October 2017 their intentions to divest, including the Diocese of Assisi. The announcement, coordinated by the Global Catholic Climate Movement, is by far the largest since the network formed a divestment working group in the wake of Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home."

Greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide, emitted from burning fossil fuels are a primary driver of climate change. The Paris Agreement on climate change calls for nearly every country to dramatically cut emissions in order to hold average global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius and if possible, below 1.5 degrees.

"A world that lets climate change grow is a world that does not honor our Creator."

— Franciscan Fr. Richard Rohr

Getting off gas not so easy

Standard electric heaters turn roughly one unit of electricity into one unit of heat. A reverse cycle air conditioner, however, uses electricity to 'pump' heat from one place to another and is incredibly efficient.

Using electricity from the grid creates more pollution than burning gas, but the electric reverse cycle air conditioner is so efficient it's still less damaging overall.

Hot water heat pumps work in the same way. When a household has both, the savings — environmental and economic — can be substantial.

That's great news for households with 'air con', but galling for anyone who can't afford one, or isn't allowed to install it.

"What about **renters**? Or **vulnerable groups** in slum suburbs? Or **pensioners**? **Students**? They either can't afford the upfront costs or don't have permission to make large alterations to their houses [or units]. **The 'clean tech' transition is wonderful, but it's leaving many such people behind.**"

For the full article by Greg Foyster in [Eureka Street](#), 25 May 2017, click [HERE](#)

Greg Foyster is a Melbourne writer and the author of the book *Changing Gears, A Pedal Powered Detour from the Rat Race* (2013).

Principles of Good Management

Belgium

The Episcopal Conference of Belgium is the first Episcopal Conference to divest from fossil fuels.

In April, the Belgian bishops signed the **Charter for the Good Management of Church Properties**, which brings *Laudato Si'* into investment policy decisions to give priority to companies focused on sustainable and renewable energy and energy efficiency.

"In the coming years, efforts must be made to fully replace investments in exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels with investments in sustainable development, renewable energy and the transition to a low-carbon economy," the bishops said in a statement.

South Africa

"As a developing country it would be easy to continue to raise emissions through the global framework and feel we are doing our equitable part," said Kevin Roussel, executive director of Catholic Welfare and Development, in South Africa, in a statement.

"We are making a strong commitment to divestment to promote a just transition in the economy which is good for the planet and good for us all."

Germany

The Bank for the Church and Caritas Germany have announced it would divest its holdings, representing **4.5 billion euro**, from companies engaged in the extraction of coal, tar sands oil and oil shale.

"As a Catholic bank, we feel strongly responsible to participate in tackling the issue of climate change," said Tommy Piemonte, sustainability research officer for the bank that represents individual Catholics along with church-related institutions and foundations, in a statement.

"We are convinced that the **integration of sustainable criteria** in all of our investment and saving products **is one of our fiduciary duties**," Piemonte added.

Make the Switch

Learn more from others who've made the switch from fossil gas, LPG or wood.

Join the [My Efficient Electric Home Facebook page](#), an Australian originated page.

Discuss methods and especially share data re space heating, water heating, and cooking in homes. Focus is on energy efficiency, energy generation and storage.

Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea

Deirdre Gardiner rsm of the Institute Mission and Ministry Team is leading the Institute's focus on Environmental Sustainability.

* ISMA PNG Chapter 2017

At this time of global vulnerability, God's transforming mercy fires our hearts anew with deeper reverence for all creation.



The Institute has commenced implementing an Environmental Sustainability policy across all communities, ministries and entities.

The rationale for the Institute taking an Integrated Approach to Sustainable Living is expressed thus:

"We, as members of the Institute, are committed to respond to global issues of injustice and to address these with a profound belief in the worth and dignity of all life that comes from the interrelatedness of God, Earth and people in one community of creation.

Currently our world is challenged by the devastating reality that two-thirds of the global population lives in hunger, poverty and disadvantage and our planet is threatened as never before with mass destruction of all its life-forms."

The Constitution of the Institute has a number of supporting statements; the recent Chapter statement mentions the "Earth community"; the Mercy International reflection process focused on *Laudato Si'*; the 8th work of Mercy is "*to show mercy to our Common Home*" and there is the well-established home of the Institute's ecological effort – *Rahamim*.

With this level of Institute support, **Chris Hill** commenced as the first **Environmental Sustainability Manager** at the Institute in June 2017 and is currently working with sisters and staff across Australia.

Share with Chris Hill, next page

Strategies for engagement from Chris Hill

After many years of working as the Director of Environmental Sustainability at Mater Misericordiae Ltd in Brisbane, Chris commenced as the first Environmental Sustainability Manager at the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea in June this year. He is confident that over coming years the Institute can become a leader in Environmental Sustainability.

Communication is key element

Communication is a key element in a successful implementation and the Institute is not starting from a zero base as many initiatives have been occurring for many years.

Compiling these stories to become part of new narrative for their sustainable journey is a key focus of Chris' role. He says that a good way to start this is to link into existing communication channels – regular meetings / publications / email groups etc to start to share some of your stories.

You can also look at targeted campaigns to specific parts of your organisation to start the awareness raising that may also include specific education, but all with the aim of gaining participation from your people.

Easy steps to start with include measuring how much you consume –

- **Energy Consumption**

How many kWh does your organisation use? Educating staff to **turn off** lights and equipment when not in use is the most cost effective saving as the energy you don't use is the easiest way to reduce costs, but initiatives such as installing LED lighting is generally a quick payback.

- **Waste**

Do you know how much and what type of waste your company generates? Recycling campaigns and education to your staff can assist with changing their behaviours – most already do this at their homes, so implementing in a business setting is usually not a hard behaviour to change. Once you can make this part of the new way of doing business it becomes the norm and you can focus on your next project.

Steps to embed Sustainability in your organisation

Chris believes you require a number of steps to embed Sustainability into your organisation.

- You need top management support to embed Environmental sustainability and to support the ongoing benefits – these will in turn often also deliver financial savings.
- You need a leader or someone to champion the cause and keep the momentum going.
- Individual contributions do make a difference – in isolation you may not believe that your contribution make a difference, however when combined with many others the change can be quite significant.
- When you can embed a change into your organisation, the dollar savings that are achieved can be redirected to address the key focus of your organisation, be it health care, education or other ministry and outreach focus.

You are very welcome to contact Deirdre Gardiner rsm and Chris Hill at [ISMA PNG](#) to discuss the Sustainability project.



* Laudato Si'

2. This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.

...

We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. *Gen 2:7*); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.

2017 Climate Change Conference

The Edmund Rice Centre's Pacific Calling Partnership will be sending a delegation of advocates from Kiribati and Tuvalu to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany in November.

"When one sees springs of salt water coming up from underground at high tide in Tuvalu – something local people have not seen until recent years – it is impossible to deny the reality of what is happening" says CEO Phil Glendenning.

We have been asked to pray for the delegation and for good outcomes of the Conference for the low-lying and small island nations of the world and their vulnerable communities.

How will we change the human story?

What do we need to do to make it likely that our children and theirs will inherit a flourishing, rather than a collapsing human world?

Our politicians must surely be starting to realise that large numbers of Australians are thoroughly fed up with the fact that the wellbeing of all (not just some) humans, and the health of the planet have become second order and neglected issues because of a widely shared ideology of endless, indiscriminate growth, unfettered markets, rampant individualism, small and impotent government and a key focus on competition.

Many Australians recognise that we are approaching crises on several fronts, not only because of changing climate, but also because of the damage already done to the myriad ecosystems on which all life depends. The only way we will avoid a catastrophic future is for humans to engage in transformational change in the way we organise society and relate to the environment on which all life depends.

For the full blog on 2 October 2017 from Emeritus Professor Bob Douglas, retired Public Health academic and a Director of [Australia21](#), go to John Menadue's Pearls and Irritations [HERE](#)

Bishops call for inclusive and sustainable economy

Australians are called to work for an economy that is based on principles of justice and equity – one that is at the service of all, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized, says the Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen.

The Australian Catholic Bishops' 2017 Social Justice Statement is entitled *Everyone's Business: Developing an inclusive and sustainable economy*.

The Statement sets out five principles that could form foundations of a just and inclusive economy:

- People and nature are not mere tools of production.
- Economic growth alone cannot ensure inclusive and sustainable development.
- Social equity must be built into the heart of the economy.
- Businesses must benefit all society, not just shareholders.
- The excluded and vulnerable must be included in decision-making.

Download the 2017 Social Justice Statement [HERE](#)

Psalm 19: 1-4, 14

The heavens declare the glory of God,
the vault of heaven proclaims his handiwork,
day discourses of it to day
night to night hands on the knowledge.

No utterance at all, no speech,
not a sound to be heard,
but from the entire earth the design stands out,
this message reaches the whole world.

May the words of my mouth always find favour,
and the whispering of my heart,
in your presence, Yahweh,
my rock, my redeemer.

New Jerusalem Bible

2017 Nobel Peace Prize to ICAN

The International Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a movement of Australian origin and began in 2007.

While indeed the work of disarmament might be 'incomplete', on 7 July this year ICAN secured the significant achievement when 122 nations adopted a UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Australia did not participate.

From the acceptance speech for 2017 Man Booker Prize by US author, George Saunders:

We are living in a strange time, he said ... but "the question at the heart of the matter is simple."

"Do we respond to fear with exclusion and negative projection and violence? Or do we take that ancient great leap of faith and do our best to respond with love? And with faith in the idea that what seems other is actually not other at all, but just us on a different day."

He was, he said in conclusion, in "a room full of believers in the word, in beauty and ambiguity and in trying to see the other person's point of view, even when that is hard."

*Stephen Romei, The Weekend Australian Review
October 21-22, 2017*

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