

Who are we?

Those visiting on March 25 and 26, 2014, are people in leadership roles in each of their faith traditions, and have travelled from various parts of Australia. The visits have been organised by the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), a multi-faith organisation with individual and organizational members from Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu and other communities. See www.arrcc.org.au

Policies we support

As religious leaders drawn from a range of diverse religious traditions, we all accept firstly our human responsibility to care for the Earth and, secondly, the scientific consensus that climate change is threatening the biosphere. Indeed, the evidence is becoming ever stronger.

All our religious traditions furthermore uphold the moral demand to act for the common good. This is all the more relevant with respect to global warming, given that the future of each nation is closely tied to the future of all other nations.

Of those political leaders who believe in anthropogenic climate change, we ask that they consider carefully the legacy they want to leave generations after them. We are at a critical moment in human history. The effects of a 1°C rise in temperatures are clearly evident. With the lag effect of current emissions, further warming is locked in. Humanity must act boldly *now* to prevent warming beyond 2°C.

We ask that those political leaders who are unconvinced by the science to act according to the precautionary principle. That is, if there is a plausible risk of substantial harm to the public, even when there is some uncertainty about the scientific knowledge, there is a social responsibility to protect the public from harm. The burden of proof is on those in authority who assert there is no substantial threat.

For all these reasons our political leaders must ensure that Australia does its fair share of the global effort to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and assist vulnerable populations to adapt. These are the policies we support:

- 1) Provision of far greater contributions to adaptation financing for developing countries, in the order of billions of dollars annually
- 2) The rapid phasing out of mining and export of fossil fuels – any emissions reductions we achieve within Australia are nullified many times over by our exports when burned overseas
- 3) More ambitious targets for reducing emissions in international negotiations: 40% below 1990 levels by 2020
- 4) A far higher Renewable Energy Target than 20% by 2020
- 5) Retaining existing legislation, or at least not replace it until a credible alternative is devised to transition the economy from high-polluting energy sources to clean, renewable energy.

Because of our relative wealth and our capacity for innovation, we Australians are in a position to lead. New industries can take over from our dependence upon mining. We could lead the world in renewable power generation. A low carbon economy can provide employment, health benefits and much of our energy security as well as helping to protect the biosphere for coming generations.

Our requests

That each MP and Senator advocate for the above policies with key decision-makers in the Parliament.

That each MP and Senator advocate for a bipartisan approach to climate policy.

That those who are unconvinced by the science accept the precautionary principle and nonetheless support action as being necessary.