



We Mercies

Care for Creation

As you take the next step, remember the traditional custodians of the land

What does
the last
Chapter
Statement
say about
our priority
areas?

*August
2013*

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

The 2008 Chapter accepted Stewardship for Creation as a priority area for action during the next five years. It recommended a spirituality that recognizes the goodness of God's creation and compels us to respond to the consequences of environmental damage for the Earth and all life.

We acknowledged that climate change is a reality of our world and a human rights issue of our times, impacting most seriously on the poorest people of our planet.

We pledged to respond through:

- *Awareness raising and education*
- *Advocacy on behalf of those suffering as a result of environmental harm*
- *Personal and communal action.*

This newsletter is a report on what has resulted communally so far.

In a way, the movement began several years before the 2008 chapter, crystallising somewhat at the 2003 Chapter. A policy on Care of the Earth had been requested by that chapter and was developed in July 2006. In March, 2007 a group gathered and committed themselves to live in a merciful and just relationship with the whole of creation. Their focus was called Sustainable Living, and their goal was *to ensure that the way we use/honour the earth, environment, energy resources, our world and our legacy of mercy enables and enhances our sustainable living.* From this meeting, three sisters volunteered to provide monthly reflections on Ecospirituality in *Mercies Link*. This has continued to the present, mainly through the contributions of Ruth Wyatte.

Come the 2008 Chapter and its priority areas for action. A group formed around this priority in April, 2010 and met regularly thereafter. Initially we formed an Action Plan and Strategies and sought Congregational feedback.

We also organised a Retreat morning on Ecospirituality with Elaine Wainwright, held a consultation about Advocacy, provided Lenten reflections cum Carbon Fast, encouraged sustainable living practices, and set up a process for Coffee and Conversation gatherings in order to encourage a mindset that situates us human beings within the unfolding story of the Universe. A number of public actions on behalf of the Environment have also been taken.

Our main form of education and communication has been through this monthly newsletter, which is now also posted on the Brisbane Mercy website.

The Care for Creation Group decided to have a particular interest in addressing climate change, and in action to reduce the impact of mining on agriculture. We have limited resources for public action in those areas but we have engaged in a few activities as listed below:

- A few sisters joined in public protest rallies, such as the Walk against Warming rally and the rally against fossil fuels in Brisbane, and activities organized by the Friends of Felton in the Toowoomba area.
- Met with the Congregation Leadership Team re development of a Congregation Environmental Policy.
- Encouraged the use of the BCC Climate Smart Home Service and signing on to Green Power.
- Published websites for organisations involved in environmental justice, including ARRCC (Australian Religious Response to Climate Change)
- Met with the Chapter Focus on Public Voice group re advocacy on environmental issues.
- Encouraged sisters to support campaigns by other organisations, sign petitions, write emails etc to newspapers, politicians, and other decision makers.

Deirdre Gardiner (membership lapsed when joined ISMAPNG) and Patricia MacGinley have been particularly active in Toowoomba, Deirdre as member of the Diocesan Social Justice Commission and Patricia as member of St Anthony's Social Justice group. The latter have strongly supported the Friends of Felton in their current issues with the mining companies, a campaign which now extends towards similar issues in Tara and Acland.

Mary Tinney coordinated the group until she joined ISMAPNG and contributed greatly through her involvement with Earth Link. Current membership of the group includes Anna Ventura, Anne McLay, Patricia MacGinley, Ruth Wyatte, and Shirley Myers.

