



# RENEWAL OF CREATION



## **GOOD STEWARDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

We seek the flourishing of the whole of God's Creation and all its creatures. We act to renew the earth from the damage done and stand in solidarity with people most impacted by human-induced environmental impact.

We must work together with Government, churches, businesses and the wider community for a sustainable future.



## OUR HOPES

- That all Australians will feel deeply connected to their natural environment and recognise the gift of living amongst all this unique diversity and seek to protect it.
- That Australians will think deeply about their place in the world and their responsibilities to the web of life. That they will value nature for its own sake, not only for its material benefits to humans.
- That they strive to live sustainable lifestyles with minimal further human impacts on our ecosystems.
- That the abundance of the earth's resources, food and water, are managed in a just, participatory and sustainable manner for the benefit of current and future generations.
- That Australians will protect the rights of future generations to live in a world that promotes health and wellbeing.

## A BIBLICAL MANDATE

- The earth is God's (Psalm 24:1-2; 89:11) and while humanity has been entrusted with care of God's creation (Genesis 1:26-31), we are only stewards not owners (see for example Leviticus 25:1-28, especially vs 23).
- The earth itself suffers "in bondage to decay" and "groans in labour pains", awaiting the freedom promised by the first fruits of the Spirit (Romans 8:19-23).
- This suffering of the creation is regularly linked with human sin and culpability (see for example Jeremiah 2:7; Hosea 4:1-3).
- The exploitation of the earth, which often sees the poorest disproportionately suffering the results of despoliation and climate change is a manifestation of the sin of greed against which the biblical witnesses strongly warn (see for example Job 20:12-29; Proverbs 1:10-19; Matthew 23:25-26; Luke 12:15-21).

- The earth itself is a witness to the glory of God (Psalm 19:1-4) and the Lordship of Christ (Luke 19:38-40) and it is important for Christians to ensure that this witness is enhanced and not tainted by our actions and approaches.

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

While God is ultimately responsible for the wellbeing of this planet, humans have been invited to work together with God in helping the earth to flourish. We are stewards of God's good creation, and as stewards, we will eventually give account for how we have fulfilled our mandate. The care of creation is a sacred trust – for it is God's world that we are invited to take care of.

The world has enough resources for all to flourish. However, unchecked greed and an insatiable desire for more, is placing our planet under significant strain. Those who are most at risk from the impact of global warming and the increasing number of extreme weather events, are often those who have consumed few of the world's resources, and are amongst the poorest and most vulnerable on this planet. The health of our planet must be a source of concern for all Christians, for it is of great concern to God.

## FOR DISCUSSION

- To be disrespectful to God's handiwork is to be disrespectful to God. Do you think this is true? Might we unintentionally disrespect God by the way we interact with creation?
- Do you think it makes any difference if we think of creation care rather than care of the environment? Why or why not?
- What can our schools do both to steward the earth well, and to assist staff and students to be good stewards? Is this an important priority for a Christian school?