

# Proposal 7

## Social Justice Board

### Environmental Goals for Congregations – Five Leaf Eco Awards

That the Synod:

- noting the long commitment of the Uniting Church to social, environmental, and intergenerational justice, which is expressed in various Assembly documents and in the Synod of WA's own resolutions on the care of creation and
  - reaffirming the importance of resolution 29/2001<sup>i</sup>, which encouraged and challenged individuals and congregations to become advocates for sustainable environmental policies and practices which protect, honour and care for our natural resources; Synod resolution 51/2005<sup>ii</sup> referring to Energy and sustainability; and Synod resolution 59/2007<sup>iii</sup> Modelling Sustainability
  - and noting the Congregational Sustainable Practice policies<sup>iv</sup> (13/08/14):
1. Commend the churches which have already been awarded Five Leaf Eco Awards
    - Victoria Park and Districts Uniting Church WA – Basic Certificate and Eco-Worship Award 12/05/2012 and
    - Ross Memorial Uniting Church WA – Basic Certificate and Eco-Worship Award 12/05/2012 and
  2. Encourage congregations to apply for Five Leaf Eco Awards and in so doing express their action to care for creation in line with our resolutions and policies.

#### Rationale

As noted in the Resolution, the Uniting Church has expressed its long standing commitment to social, environmental and intergenerational justice which is at risk due to the effects of climate change due to human impact on the planet. In order that we do more than just pass resolutions to show our commitment to the care of creation, this motion asks us to act.

The Five Leaf Eco-Awards are an ecumenical environmental change program for churches. Using a series of environmental awards, the program seeks to inspire, assist and reward churches for caring for God's creation. The Five Leaf Eco-Awards provide a framework for basic and advanced environmental action which is specifically designed for churches and religious bodies.

The program encourages holistic action for the environment by covering five areas or 'leaves':

- Buildings
- Worship
- Congregation
- Outreach
- Community Leadership

Congregations that want to follow up this program can find out the criteria for the awards here: <https://fiveleafecoawards.org/award-criteria/>



As a Synod it is an important witness to our belief in the importance of creation care, if we could have many more congregations whose life together enabled them to qualify for the Five Leaf Eco Awards. The Awards offer an incentivised framework for congregations to enact the environmental policies established by the Synod.

The SJB notes with appreciation the work and leadership of Jess Morthorpe in establishing and running the Five Leaf Eco-Awards and making them available for use by the Synod.

**Mover: Karen Sloan**

**Seconder: Ruth Vertigan**

**For enquiries contact Geoff Bice, Justice & Mission Officer 9260 9800**

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<sup>i</sup> **29/2001** The Synod approved by consensus to encourage and challenge both individuals and congregations to:

- a) become advocates for sustainable environmental policies and practices which protect, honour and care for our natural resources;
- b) be proactive in supporting local, national and international environmental agreements and initiatives;
- c) request the Social Justice Commission to initiate a conversation across the synod to develop a practical commitment to the sustainable care of Church land, from a biblical and theological basis;
- d) study *Election 2001: A Briefing Paper* regarding the linkage of commitment to our natural environment with commitments such as reconciliation and treaty; regional, rural and remote Australia; fair employment; community service delivery; and structural causes of poverty.

<sup>ii</sup> **51/2005** The Synod agreed to:

- 1 reaffirm the importance of resolution 29/2001, which encouraged and challenged individuals and congregations to
  - a. become advocates for sustainable environmental policies and practices which protect, honour and care for our natural resources;
  - b. be proactive in supporting local, national and international environmental agreements and initiatives; (by consensus)
- 2 encourage leaders and members of the Church to keep in touch with the resources and activities associated with WA Collaboration, which is a partnership of non-government organisations committed to a sustainable future for Western Australia ([www.wacollaboration.org.au](http://www.wacollaboration.org.au)); (approved by agreement)
- 3 commend government and private initiatives that have further developed the use or potential use of renewable energy sources in Western Australia during the last year; (by consensus)
- 4 urge the Commonwealth Government
  - a. to take seriously our corporate civic responsibilities for the stewardship of the earth for the benefit of future generations; (consensus)
  - b. to ensure that contracts for the sale of to other countries include safeguards to best protect the lives of people and the long term environment. (approved by agreement)
  - c. to assist in the transfer of cleaner technologies to developing countries and to assist with their safer mining of energy sources and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. (by consensus)
  - d. to increase its support for research and development of environmentally benign, renewable energy sources along with more sustainable lifestyle and industrial behaviours. (by consensus)
- 5 request the Social Justice commission to resource congregations and the Council of Synod for further consideration of the mining and use of uranium. (by consensus)

<sup>iii</sup> **59/2007** The Synod agreed:

- 1 Note the statement of the Assembly Standing Committee 'For the Sake of the Planet and all its People: A Uniting Church in Australia Statement on Climate Change';
- 2 Note the Synod resolution 51/2005 relating to a range of issues on environmental sustainability;



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- 3 Welcome the 'Green Church Handbook' as a resource for congregations and individuals to discuss issues of faith and sustainability;
  - 4 Encourage all congregations and faith communities to
    - a. undertake an energy self-audit and seek ways to minimise their production of greenhouse gas emissions;
    - b. respond to the results of the energy self audit.
  - 5 Encourage congregations schools and agencies to purchase Green Energy;
  - 6 Request the General Secretary to direct the Uniting Church Centre to lead by example in seeking ways to reduce the production of greenhouse gas emissions by;
    - a. arranging for an energy audit of the Uniting Church Centre;
    - b. develop a strategy to respond to the results of the energy audit in 6a.;
    - c. purchasing Green Energy by 2009

<sup>iv</sup> **13/08/14** General Council agreed:

In response to policies adopted by the Uniting Church Assembly and the Synod of Western Australia:

- Synod Resolutions 29/2001 advocating sustainable policy and practice
- Synod resolution 51/2005 Energy and sustainability
- Synod resolution 59/2007 Modelling Sustainability

the Synod encourages all congregations to minimise their impact on the environment by preventing pollution and continually improving our environmental performance by increasing communication and awareness of our efforts in accordance with this policy and fostering environmentally responsible behaviour amongst our members and the wider community.

We ask each congregation to accept that they have an obligation to demonstrate good environmental stewardship and social responsibility to the community, as we recognize the need for responsible and sustainable development and the pursuit of social justice.

(The full list and detail of this resolution is available here: <https://ecochurcheswa.net/how-to-make-your-church-more-eco-friendly/>)

