



BUDDHIST Climate Change **ACTION KIT**



2 GREENHOUSE GASES, RELEASED THROUGH USE OF FOSSIL FUELS, LAND USE CHANGES AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES, FORM THE SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION FOR HUMAN-INDUCED CLIMATE CHANGE. BUT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FAITH, THE CAUSES GO FAR DEEPER.

We need to understand how we see ourselves in the world—in terms of how humanity relates to the natural world, how we relate to each other, and as Buddhists, how we are inter-related to and ultimately inseparable from nature and indeed the whole Universe.

The study of Ecology confirms what the Buddha taught us about the interconnectedness of all living things, including ourselves. Human flourishing depends upon ecological flourishing and cannot be separated from it and, as a consequence, environmental damage impacts on the health and welfare of humans. As Buddhists, to acknowledge the sacredness of life in all realms of existence, in all sentient beings, in all people and the natural world is to respect and care for all.

This is why climate change is a deeply ethical issue. It also has profound justice implications: the people who are least responsible for greenhouse gas pollution will suffer disproportionately from its effects. This includes people across the world who live in poverty and consume few resources. It also includes people like farmers in Australia who suffer disproportionately from drought. And critically, it includes children and future generations who have had no say in the damage being done. As Buddhists who understand the workings of karma and rebirth we know that we who are alive now are not excluded from those future generations.

From the perspective of Karma we need to ask ourselves some deep questions. How will our actions today affect the world and thus ourselves in the future and in future lives? The Buddha taught that greed is one of the characteristics that inevitably cause us suffering. As people living in an affluent country, how many material possessions, how much material wealth is 'enough'? How can we better connect with others (human and non-human) in our world? How would concern for the natural world and all beings be demonstrated in our lives in practice? Ensuring that our own lifestyles are not harmful to others is a good start but is it the full extent of our ecological moral responsibility?

Along with non-harming or not doing evil the Buddha also taught that we should "Do good." What action can we "do" on behalf of the environment? Are we called to a broader civic engagement, to promote policies which will serve the common good? In the words of the His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama; "If it is reasonable action which is by nature beneficial to truth and justice, then by abandoning procrastination and discouragement, the more you encounter obstruction, the more you should strengthen your courage and make effort. That is the conduct of a wise and good person."

Caring for the environment or the natural world is assumed by most religions, but the challenge remains for religious communities to incorporate caring for the environment into their common life. This requires everyone in the community to make it a priority to acquaint themselves with the religious basis for action and, to an extent, the practical science and appropriate responses. It may take a couple of years of consistent effort, but an ethic of caring for the natural world should begin to be expressed in the various dimensions of Buddhist community life, including:

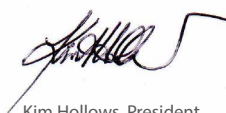
- » rituals, Dhamma teachings, practice of Dana and other Buddhist observances
- » the embodiment of simplicity and contentment modelled in the lifestyle of Buddhist monastic communities
- » the growing ecological awareness and mindful lifestyles of community members
- » the way community properties are managed
- » the community's understanding and living out of its calling in the wider world.

We hope you will take on this challenge to help your own Buddhist community become ecologically more aware and responsive. In addition to the material in this kit and that available on their website, ARRCC can also provide direct support—please contact info@arrcc.org.au. Links are also available on FABC website www.buddhistcouncil.org.au

Yours in faith,



Ms Thea Ormerod, President
Australian Religious Response to Climate Change



Kim Hollows, President,
Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils



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Steps2Sustainability

A PRACTICAL WAY FOR COMMUNITIES TO TURN
CONCERN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE INTO ACTION,
AND TO START LEADING BY EXAMPLE



BEFORE YOU BEGIN: START A SUSTAINABILITY TEAM

For a community to go on a journey towards sustainability—towards taking the right action needed to ensure that the health, well-being and interconnectedness of all living things is maintained—it is really important that there are people committed to driving the process.

The fact that you are reading this indicates that you are probably the likely candidate to start the ball rolling! We strongly recommend that you seek out other like-minded people from your Buddhist community, and form a sustainability team. It is not always easy for one person to press on by themselves, but you'll be amazed what a small group of inspired people can achieve! This can be a new team, or it can be an existing team that takes on this extra role—even just one or two other people is a good starting point. At this point, we recommend that you **“come aboard the ARRC”**—register with us and tell us about your Buddhist community's commitment to take action on climate change. We can support you on your journey.

We suggest that you try to meet outside (if the weather permits!). You could try a park or garden or even a walk in the bush to raise your awareness and mindfulness of the natural world, rather than just talking about it as a cerebral exercise! Working for sustainability will only be sustainable if all involved are enjoying the process and developing an appreciation and understanding that the Dhamma, spiritual practice and wholesome action in the pursuit of sustainability are all intrinsically connected. Doing good with a pure heart for the sake of all sentient beings is the basis of compassion and is the practice. Doing this with others can be even more enriching.

The basics (first meeting)

You might be well experienced in leading groups, or it might be the first time. Here are some suggestions of what to cover at your first meeting:

- » Ask each member to share their own story about how they feel about or connect with the natural world, or indeed the whole cosmos, and how this integrates with or influences their practice. You could start your meetings by each sharing how you have connected with the natural world since you last met and what this has meant for you spiritually and emotionally.
- » How would each of you personally like to grow in your connection with and care for the natural world? Which of the **Steps2Sustainability** do you feel most passionate about? Which do you want to learn more about?
- » Establish how often you want to meet initially. Perhaps sometimes you will meet to talk about plans for the **Steps2Sustainability**, or just to connect as part of nature together, whether just for a walk, to meditate together or to plant something together or take part in bush regeneration—or you may have other ideas. And don't forget to set a time for your next meeting!

You might like to explore the following at this or subsequent meetings:

Idea 1: Take the temperature of your faith community

- » How does your Buddhist community currently connect with the natural world? What is the level of awareness within your community on Climate Change and Sustainability and where do you think people stand on these issues? Think of all the different demographic groups (nationalities, families, seniors etc.). Consider how the various views about climate change are reflected in: teaching; conversations; how your particular Buddhist community operates; activities the community runs/is involved with; and how it saves and spends funds etc.
- » What do you think may be the barriers to your Buddhist community becoming more sustainable?
- » What are the information gaps for your Buddhist community that your team could help fill?

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: **START A TEAM**

Idea 2: Identify existing strengths in your Buddhist community

- » Who in your Buddhist community do you already know of who has knowledge or skills to contribute towards becoming more sustainable?
- » What are ways that your Buddhist community is already acting sustainably? How can you affirm these, create space for stories and ideas to be shared and make these actions infectious?
- » What other groups involved in sustainability are Buddhist community members already engaged with?
- » Brainstorm opportunities, small and large, as to how you can engage your Buddhist community in the **Steps2Sustainability**, and provide opportunities for them to connect with the natural world (or become more aware of how they already are interconnected as part of nature.) From this list, identify which of these opportunities would be achievable to start with.

Idea 3: Talk to your leaders

- » Who do you need to talk with to get support for doing **Steps2Sustainability** with your Buddhist community? Meet with them and explain what you would like to do, and ask how they can support your team to get your community on board. If it's not possible to do the **Steps2Sustainability** with the whole of your Buddhist community initially, perhaps you could do it with a small group, study group or youth group?

RESOURCES

- » *Ecological Buddhism*: www.ecobuddhism.org/solutions/wde/harding
- » *Sanha Seva*: www.sanghaseva.org
- » *Joanna Macy*: www.joannamacy.net/engaged-buddhism/spiritual-practices-for-activists.html
- » *Buddhist Geeks*: www.buddhistgeeks.com

Articles on connecting with the Natural World:

- » *Too tired to care?* www.arrcc.org.au/are_we_all_too_tired_to_care
- » *Children experiencing nature*: www.smh.com.au/opinion/children-must-experience-nature-in-order-to-learn-its-worth-saving-20121121-29qbp.html

Creative thinking and brainstorming tools:

- » *Mind Tools*: www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_CT.htm
- » *TEAR Australia's guide to sharing your story with others*: www.tear.org.au/static/files/resources/advocacyInfo-NarrativeWorkshop.pdf

NEXT STEPS

You're now ready to start **Steps2Sustainability**. The followings steps are not meant to be prescriptive—you don't necessarily have to do one step before you start the next (for example, you might have already started on some of the later steps before you heard about **Steps2Sustainability**). Or some earlier steps might not be suitable for your Buddhist community (for example, your community may not have its own building—in which case switching the building over to GreenPower may not make sense). So feel free to adapt the **Steps2Sustainability** to suit your particular situation—you and your Sustainability Team will be best placed to know what is appropriate for your Buddhist community and the surrounding community.

STEP 1: ENGAGE YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY

A great way to get your Buddhist community interested in taking action on climate change is to start talking with them about it.

There are many angles to approach this from. The “Tools for Learning” section provides resources for you to learn about the issue and educate your community. But while it is important to understand some of the science behind climate change there are also other aspects to think about. We need to keep talking about what justice means in this context as Buddhists and hopefully as ethical virtuous people. If we have been part of the societies that have contributed the most to climate change, what response are we required to make to vulnerable communities who have made the least contribution to climate change, many of them in Buddhist countries, but will possibly suffer the most? What does justice mean from our Buddhist perspective here? Some of this is also covered in the Tools for Learning section.

As Buddhists, we also need to re-discover what our traditions have to say about the natural world. How we are to relate to it and how does taking refuge, keeping precepts and virtuous conduct relate to sustainability? How does karma and rebirth fit into the whole picture? We must include ourselves in the future generations that will bear the brunt of suffering brought about by climate change. Will our wholesome conduct and full adherence to the noble eightfold path be an aid in minimising our carbon footprint? The “Tools for Reflection” section provides some resources for integrating the Dharma with the practical, moral and ethical issues around climate change.

You might like to integrate the reflection and learning tools throughout your *Steps2Sustainability* journey, interspersing some education with practical actions to give your Buddhist community an action-reflection experience.

To start with, here are a few ideas you might like to use along the way to help people connect with the roots of our faith tradition, as well as looking towards a future of hope. Remember that people learn in different ways, so it's great if you can provide different styles of opportunities for people to engage with the issues.

Idea 1: Reclaiming the Natural World as an intrinsic part of Buddhist Spiritual Practice

Just like you did with your sustainability team, start helping your Buddhist community connect with the Natural World.

All of the significant events in the life of the Buddha and the formation of Buddhism took place in the natural world, in the forests of northern India 2,500 years ago. Sakyamuni Buddha was born under a Sal tree, practiced austerities in the forest, became enlightened under a Bodhi tree, gave his first Dharma discourse in a deer park, meditated and taught in forests, wild places, parks and bamboo groves. His monks and nuns also wandered and lived in these natural areas. Thus nature is intrinsically connected with the ideal of seclusion and was recommended by the Buddha and praised by his enlightened disciples as the ideal place for the practice of Dharma that leads to enlightenment. In the Buddha's teachings living in nature is always synonymous with peace and contentment. These qualities of the forests and groves are used over and over as metaphors for the stillness of the mind that happens in meditation.

Over the centuries in Buddhist countries monastics and dedicated lay people have sought out forests and wild, secluded places to set up monasteries and hermitages to practise meditation.

This is something many of us, even the most devout Buddhists, have lost sight of, with much of our lives, work and even dharma practice and activities conducted indoors, shut off from the natural world. We may need to consciously reclaim this, and start with some practical small steps at our temples and meditation centres. This may involve bringing more of nature indoors so people are conscious of nature in some form as they practice or by taking people outdoors for meditation, rituals or pujas so there is a heightened awareness of nature and their connectedness with it. Well placed windows and trees, plants and pleasant garden areas will all enhance the appreciation of our connectedness with nature.

STEP 1: **ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY**

However we achieve it, our aim is to allow people to experience their connection with the natural world and the more they interact with it the more they will understand it and the need to protect it. This needs to be the basis for our action on climate change and sustainability. Without a strong inner motivation that comes from our faith in the Dharma we will be in danger of burning out.

Here is one activity you could try:

- » Have a Dharma reflection and meditation or mindfulness session outdoors and give people ways to interact with nature as part of the session. You might like to find sutras, Jataka tales or quotes from various Buddhist teachers and masters about aspects of nature. For example after giving a reflection on or reading a teaching about impermanence, participants could spend time contemplating impermanence in the plants or trees or even dead leaves, in the proximity of the temple. The same contemplation can then be applied to oneself.
- » A similar exercise could be done with the reflection and quotation being on the four elements, earth, water, air and fire.

Idea: 2 Inform your Buddhist community about human impacts on the environment and human responsibility

In one of Buddhism's iconic images, the Lord Buddha sits in meditation with his left palm upright on his lap, while his right hand touches the earth. Demonic forces have tried to unseat him, because their king, Mara, claims that place under the Bodhi tree. As they proclaim their leader's powers, Mara demands that Gautama produce a witness to confirm his spiritual awakening. The Buddha simply touches the earth with his right hand, and the Earth itself immediately responds: "I am your witness." Mara and his minions vanish. The morning star appears in the sky. This moment of supreme enlightenment is the central experience from which the whole of the Buddhist tradition unfolds.

(Why the Buddha Touched the Earth by John Stanley & David Loy)

Human-induced climate change is the result of the way humans have used and exploited the earth. We need to be willing to see the reality of this, learn about how it happened, and what needs to be done practically and structurally to change this relationship with the earth. We need to reclaim our roles as carers and stewards of the Natural world.

There are a number of ways you could do this, through dharma talks and discussions, communications to the community, small groups, or directly from monastic and lay teachers and leaders in your community.

Here are some activities you could try:

- » Encourage your monastic and lay teachers to include discussion about climate change in their dharma talks and to include reflections about the natural environment and climate change in meditations, sutra classes and in various ritual activities such as offering food and requisites to monastics, flower pujas etc.
- » Give a short presentation or talk about climate change at an appropriate time.
- » Invite a guest speaker to come and talk to you about climate change. We may be able to help you find a speaker, especially if you are based in greater Sydney, Melbourne or Canberra—just contact us.
- » Have a special event about climate change—maybe you could watch one of the documentaries that have been produced, such as *An Inconvenient Truth Sequel: Truth to Power* and *This Changes Everything*, followed by a discussion session afterwards. TEAR Australia has some great DVD resources.
- » If your temple has text study groups or small groups, let them know about study resources that will help them engage with issues of faith, climate change and justice. (See Tools for Reflection resource list).
- » Show dvds and share stories about how climate change is impacting poor communities around the world.



STEP 1: ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

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Idea 3: Remember the poor

As you educate your Buddhist community about climate change, help people keep in their consciousness that it is the world's poorest and most vulnerable people—many in traditional Buddhist countries—who are impacted the most. As sea levels rise, people's livelihood and homes in the river deltas of Burma and Vietnam will be severely affected. Increasing temperatures are already causing a decrease in rice production of marginal growing areas in northern and central Sri Lanka. Shrinking Himalayan glaciers result in increasingly unreliable water supplies for farmers on the Tibetan plateau, Nepal and the Indian Himalaya.

Here are some ideas:

- » Displaced by a changing climate: Ask people to share with the person next to them any times they have moved house, and reasons for moving. They might like to share what the experience was like for them, and whether the reasons for moving impacted whether it was a good or bad experience. After a few minutes, draw people together and share a story about people in developing countries who are displaced because of climate change (see below for stories). Give people some time in silence to reflect on what it would be like to have to become homeless because of a climate related event.
- » Let people know about organisations that have projects that support communities to adapt to climate change and reduce the risks of climate disasters. You could run fundraisers or encourage people to donate to these organisations.

Idea 4: Get your Buddhist community to envision a new way forward

It's important not just to be informing your community about how the Biosphere is being damaged, but to have a vision together of the renewal of Nature, and how we can be a part of this. Your community members will no doubt have many creative ideas and visions amongst them about how you can become more sustainable together. Find ways to give space for these creative ideas to arise and be shared. Get people excited about what you could work towards together. Also try to look at where renewal is already happening.

Here is one activity you could try:

- » Facilitate a community visioning exercise; for example, ask people to draw a picture of your Buddhist community and what it might look like if it was more sustainable. Ask them to include a picture of themselves in the picture, showing the role they might take in this vision. Spend time sharing your pictures and visions with each other, and perhaps stick them up on the walls so that people can be inspired by each other's visions (and others can see them later). Your team could then use some of the ideas expressed in these visions and turn them into action. You might even get clues from the pictures about who you could enlist to help!
- » Think about ways that can become regular rhythms in the life of your community to connect with the natural world physically and spiritually.

RESOURCES

- » See **Tools for Learning** for information on the science and morality of climate change and how climate change is impacting poor communities around the world.
- » See **Tools for Reflection** for statements on climate change from different denominational leaders, resources and sample talks and articles from a Buddhist perspective.
- » *Community visioning resources:* www.gdrc.org/ngo/vision-dev.html
- » Stories of displacement: www.irinnews.org/InDepthMain.aspx?indepthid=73&reportid=82633



STEPS 2 SUSTAINABILITY

STEP 2: TACKLE YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP'S CLIMATE IMPACTS

Now it's time to get practical! Getting your place of worship to lead by example is a great starting point.

Community is powerful in shaping who we are, our values, our habits, whether spoken or unspoken, the culture we create in these communities can make a big impact. How your Buddhist community talks and acts about climate change when you are together can have a powerful effect, both on the wider community and on how individuals will think about their habits at home. We want to equip you to help it become a part of everyday conversation and action of your Buddhist community to connect with and care for the Biosphere.

The main impacts on climate change fall into one of the following four categories:

- » energy generation,
- » energy use,
- » transport,
- » consumption and waste.

You may wish to pick one at a time to work on, or instigate a number of small initiatives across different areas. The following pages provide a number of ideas for you to choose from or gain inspiration from.

Idea 1: Energy generation and energy use

Energy generation is one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore climate change. Changing the source of your Buddhist community's energy will make a big difference to its environmental impact.

There are a number of ways that you can change the source, and the easiest way is switching to GreenPower. 100% GreenPower costs a little extra, but means that all the energy consumed is from certificated renewable energy. Lower percentages are available which cost less but of course are not 100% renewable. You can also consider installing solar panels on your buildings, as the rooftops of our buildings are a vast untapped potential for capturing energy from the sun. It is likely that you will generate more than you use and therefore it will become an income as well as net electricity generator! In addition, you can switch to solar (or solar-assisted) hot water, if you have buildings that have a significant need for hot water, or, if you are using renewable power, install a heat-pump hot water system to avoid fossil fuel use entirely.

Addressing climate change is not just about renewable energy. It is also about reducing our energy consumption in the first place. If our electricity demand goes down, the need for electricity generation also decreases and we reduce the impact on the natural environment. Besides this, actually reducing your energy consumption has the added benefit of reducing your energy bill.

To reduce your energy consumption, get an energy audit done at your temple. This helps you to identify where you can save energy. This might be as simple as turning off the lights and heating when not in use, making use of blinds or shades to prevent your building from heating up as much on hot days, or changing to energy-efficient light bulbs. It might also include suggestions for insulating your buildings, or upgrading your appliances to energy efficient models.

Here is a suggested activity:

» **“Switching off” at a temple Dharma talk, poya day, puja, Wesak celebration or other significant ritual or event:** At the beginning of the Dharma service, ask people to completely switch off their mobile phones and any other devices. Invite people to walk around the building, switching off all lights, appliances and power points (except for the fridge if there is one!). Ask people as they return, to sit together in silence. Ask people to reflect on how it felt to be asked to switch off their devices. What might be reasons behind any resistance we felt to switching off. How did it feel to be literally “switching off” together as a community? What benefits are there to switching off, for the planet, for the community, and spiritually speaking as individuals? What would be the impacts of “switching off” regularly—literally and in our minds and bodies? Get people to brainstorm ways that the community can reduce its energy use or change to renewable energy generation. If appropriate, light candles (or invite people to light individual candles) and read out or hand out relevant verses about light, darkness and stillness for people to meditate on (suggestions are at the end of the ‘Tools for Reflection’ section).

This would be a wonderful activity for Wesak.

» Another idea would be to hold a “switching off” dinner or other activity for Earth Hour in March.

RESOURCES

- » *Repower Worship guide*
www.arrcc.org.au/repower-worship
- » *Find out about community grants and rebates*
www.environment.gov.au/about-us/grants-funding
www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/grant_main.jsp
- » *Check your local council for Green Matching Grants eg*
www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/grants-and-sponsorships
- » For help with up-front financing of solar panels for your faith community, try CORENA, Citizens Own Renewable Energy Network Australia
www.corenafund.org.au/
- » For help with larger local renewable energy projects, visit the Community Power Agency’s website:
www.cpagency.org.au/



STEP 2: **REDUCE YOUR IMPACTS**

Idea 2: Transport

We all have to get around—but often we assume that the fastest, cheapest or most convenient option is best, without considering the impact on our environment. CO₂ from transport is one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. We need to think differently about how we get around: whether it's our daily transport, whether we chose to use the phone or computer instead of travelling to meetings or how we choose to go on holidays. We need to start factoring in the cost to the environment as well. Perhaps our bodies and minds would also benefit from a less frenetic pace. We can start to help our communities become more conscious about transport by thinking about how we all travel to our temples. Are there other alternatives to consider that are not only better for the environment, but also help draw our community together? ARRCC's annual event to encourage walking or riding to worship is one way that you can encourage your Buddhist community to get around differently. Your own community might come up with other ideas that are more appropriate for your situation.

Here is a suggested activity to get your Buddhist community thinking about transport:

- » Visually map where people in your community live by getting people to come and put a pin on a map. Mark where your temple is with a large red dot.
- » Get people to draw their journey from home to the temple, and write or draw what form of transport they normally use to get there. If they drive, get them to write down how many spare seats they have in their car.
- » The idea is not to make people feel guilty about their mode of transport, but to provide a visual mapping tool that can prompt ideas for connecting with others nearby that they could share travel with, and get ideas from others.
- » What benefits are there, apart from environmental ones, to thinking differently about how we travel to our place of worship (and everywhere else), such as social and communal benefits?
- » Brainstorm different ways that as a community, you could travel to your temple with minimum impact on the environment. Are there options to car pool or use a car share, to take public transport together, to organise a 'walking bus' or cycle together? Promoting an easy-to-use carbon offset scheme is another way to help people to respond.
- » How can you take these ideas and apply them to travel in your everyday lives?

RESOURCES:

- » *ARRCC's Walk or Ride to Worship*
http://www.arrcc.org.au/walk_or_ride_to-worship
- » *Bike bus*
www.bikebus.org.au
- » *Bike libraries and bike share schemes*
www.newcastlebikeecologycentre.blogspot.com.au
www.melbournebikeshare.com.au
- » *Car pool websites*
www.shareurride.com.au
- » *Car share initiatives*
www.carnextdoor.com.au
www.greensharecar.com.au
www.flexicar.com.au
www.goget.com.au

Idea 3: Consumption and waste

Our society is addicted to stuff. We have an assumption that more is better, and that we all need to own everything individually. We are told by subliminal marketing and the media that unless we have things, we won't be acceptable and that there is no such thing as enough. We are told that it is cheaper to buy new than to repair, even if it exploits workers in its production processes and products are quickly disposable, contributing to landfill. And of course it consumes vast amounts of fossil fuels to produce these new goods. Greenhouse gas emissions from landfill further harm our atmosphere. It is not only consumer goods that are an issue. Food waste is also a problem. For example, Sustainability Victoria estimates that food is about 40% of what is thrown out by Victorian households. Rotting food in landfill releases methane, a greenhouse gas many times more potent than carbon dioxide. How can our Buddhist communities expose marketing hype for what it is, and instead model a life-giving alternative?

The food we choose to eat also has an impact on climate change. Meat production has an environmental impact many times higher than vegetables and grains, and the emissions from the long distance transportation that much of our food requires to get to our tables is something we need to be conscious of as well. We can encourage our communities to think about LOAF (local, organic, animal-friendly, fairly traded) principles when considering their 'daily bread'. How can we also be more aware of the waste we create and reducing it—or in the case of compostable waste, even returning it to the earth as nourishment? Thinking about consumption doesn't just stop with reducing what we use and how we use it. It also involves considering the fair distribution of resources. How can we consume less so that resources can be freed up to support the world's poorest who are hit hardest by the impacts of climate change? How can we become more aware of their stories and needs?

Poverty remains an issue in Australia. However, for most Australians there are many possibilities for cutting down our consumption and becoming aware of how we consume, and we can be creative in the way we do this.

With your team, discuss:

- » What does the Buddha say about consumption—how can you get your community talking about what is “enough” and how our consumption impacts the planet as well as our spirituality? Think about greed and craving and how it relates to its opposites, contentment, restraint and letting go and the Four Noble Truths.
- » What are all the resources that your community “consumes” together—at your temples and monasteries? Think about the quantity, quality, where it is sourced and how the environmental impact of these could be reduced.
- » What type of waste does your Buddhist community produce and do you know how much there is of it and where it goes? How can you make your Buddhist community aware of this?
- » What does your Buddhist community do with your waste? Are all possible recycling options in place? Does it avoid disposable cutlery, plates and cups or glasses and bottled water?



STEP 2: **REDUCE YOUR IMPACTS**

Here are a few ideas to consider:

- » If your Buddhist community shares meals together, at your temple or at monasteries you support, brainstorm how these meals can be sustainably sourced. Think local produce, vegetarian, with minimum packaging and processing, and also think about where the waste will go too. How could you educate your community about the environmental impact of food and LOAF principles as you eat together or for the meals you prepare for the monastic community? Consider the extra merit of not only supplying tasty, delicious food for monks and nuns but also food whose environmental impacts are as harmless as possible. This must surely be incalculably more meritorious.
- » Could you set up a worm farm or compost at your temple or Buddhist monastic community?
- » Does your community use a lot of papers? Does it ensure they are recycled? Are they double sided? What are other options to using disposable paper?
- » Could you host a creative event that helps people think differently about consumption—an upcycling or refashioning workshop, a clothes swap etc.?
- » Are there possibilities to set up a register for your community to share appliances, tools or other resources?

RESOURCES

- » *Meat Free Day*
www.arrcc.org.au/eat-less-meat
- » *National Energy Efficiency Network (NEEN)*
www.neen.org.au/project/placesofworship/
- » *Collaborative consumption*
www.greenvillages.com.au/green-tips/our-top-collaborative-consumption-sites
www.collaborativeconsumption.com/index.php
- » *The Story of Stuff*
www.thestoryofstuff.org
- » *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle*
www.livinggreener.gov.au/waste/recycling/reduce-reuse-recycle
- » *Upcycle*
www.upcyclethat.com
- » *Hosting a Swap Party*
www.recyclingweek.planetark.org/bas/host-a-swap.cfm
- » *Composting*
www.cleanup.org.au/au/LivingGreener/composting.html
- » *Worm farming*
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/communities/languageresources/110739-Worm-farming-English.pdf
- » *Freecycle*
www.freecycle.org/group/au
- » Accessing locally grown food:
 - *Local Farmers Markets directory*
www.farmersmarkets.org.au/markets
 - *Food Connect*
www.foodconnect.com.au
 - *Harvest Hub*
www.harvesthub.com.au
 - *Aussie Farmers Direct*
www.aussiefarmers.com.au

STEP 3: REDUCE YOUR BUDDHIST COMMUNITY'S IMPACTS AT HOME

Our daily habits are the hardest ones to change—but the powerful thing about religious communities is that coming together regularly as a group of people can help give each person that ongoing encouragement, examples and opportunity for discussions and questions to help people make those changes.

People can feel very private about their daily habits, or harbor guilt about their environmental impact. We want to help you create the kind of culture that affirms people in the steps they are taking already and generates creative ideas for them to go further in their journey.

Just as we outlined getting the people at your temple or the monks or nuns at your monastery to think about transport, energy generation and energy use, consumption and waste in your gatherings together, now you can help people think about these issues in their lives at home. There are several online carbon footprint calculators that you can encourage people to use to become aware of their individual impact as a starting point, and there will be endless ideas amongst your community about ways that they can cut down their impact. Think about ways to help your Buddhist community share ideas and celebrate positive steps forward.

Here is one idea you could try at your temple or monastery:

- » Make a tree trunk and branches out of old cardboard to stick on a wall. Have a pen and some leaf shaped pieces of cardboard and pins/blu-tak available nearby where people can write down the tips they have tried and pin up their leaf on the tree to encourage others. This could also be done as part of a worship service. Alternatively, it could be displayed for a longer time, with the opportunity for people to contribute to it from week to week, perhaps reading out a couple of leaves each week to encourage people to participate and give them ideas. Or one idea from a different community member could be shared each week.

Here are some suggestions for how community members could help each other become more sustainable in their homes:

- » Encourage people to host a Permablitz (where a group of people go to one person's house to help them set up an edible garden in a day).
- » Encourage people to do a sustainability audit of their home and invite a few people over to help them implement it (perhaps changing to energy efficient light bulbs and low-flow shower heads, setting up a compost/worm farm system etc.) or have a small team in your congregation who would be willing to help people do this.
- » Encourage people to access local farmers markets or join an initiative like Food Connect that supports local farmers and helps to reduce the food miles of people's groceries. Perhaps your temple or someone in your community could host a local collection hub.
- » Encourage people to think carefully about choosing the items and food they donate to temples and monasteries. First ask first what is really needed to minimize waste. Then choose fresh foods that are sourced locally and in season, and non-perishables with minimal and recyclable packaging.
- » Encourage people to live more simply and consume less, contributing some of their savings so that they are able to support poor communities trying to adapt to climate change

RESOURCES

- » Carbon footprint calculator: www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx
- » Reducing energy: www.livinggreener.gov.au/energy
- » Cutting down on waste at home: www.greenvillages.com.au/green-tips/top-tips-for-waste-avoidance
- » Planning sustainable holidays: www.greenvillages.com.au/green-tips/eco-travel-our-top-tips
- » Permablitz: www.permablitz.net



STEPS 2 SUSTAINABILITY

STEP 4: SPREAD THE WORD BEYOND YOUR BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

Now that your Buddhist community has made a start on becoming more sustainable, collectively and individually, think about working with the wider community around you to become more sustainable too.

Addressing climate change cannot be done individually—we have to work together to make society-wide changes. People of faith have been described as having the function of yeast in dough—they were never meant to be isolated as a community or as individuals, but to be actively contributing to society and working alongside others to bring about change. Your Buddhist community can contribute to broader cultural change by sharing the changes you have been making and finding other groups in the wider community who are interested in going on this journey too. You may find that there are people in the wider community who are like-minded and are looking for others with similar values to work with. You might also find that there are many in your community who rarely think about issues of sustainability but are open to learning and becoming involved.

This could include engaging other religious communities in your area, talking to schools, community centres and even the local council. Let others in your area know what you have done and inspire them to do similarly. Over time, you could work towards forming a network of environmentally-conscious faith communities in your area.

With your sustainability team, discuss:

- » What connections does your Buddhist community already have with the wider community that you could start with to engage in issues of environmental responsibility and raising awareness about climate change? Are there other groups in the community that are already environmentally active? Climate action groups? Permaculture groups? Landcare? Bush regeneration etc.?
- » What are ideas that you have implemented with your Buddhist community that you could broaden to invite the wider community to be involved with too?
- » Where are the places in the wider community where people gather (community centres, community activities, local markets or festivals etc.)? Which of these groups might be interested in co-hosting an event or initiative with you in the community about these issues?
- » How could you get your Buddhist community members to think about their wider circles of influence? For example their workplaces, places of study and other groups they are connected to?
- » What other faith groups are nearby, and how can your congregation engage with them and perhaps learn from their perspectives on caring for the Natural Environment or the ideas they are already trying?

Brainstorm ideas about initiatives you could take as a Buddhist community to engage with the wider community about sustainability and climate change. Ideas might include:

- » Hosting a local interfaith discussion about Caring for the Biosphere, or a community event with a guest speaker on climate change. You could also hold a discussion forum about sustainability and make space for people to share what they are doing in the community.
- » Talking to others in the street where your temple is located to start a Sustainability Street initiative or start a local initiative with a group that serves the community, e.g. a local Permablitz group/network that offers to help homes in the neighbourhood, start edible gardens.
- » Organising a clothes swap, upcycling workshop, Clean Up Australia Day, tree planting or similar event that you could invite the wider community to, or a local collaborative consumption network.
- » Making your own YouTube video to share the journey of your Buddhist community so far.

RESOURCES

- » *Host a community forum*
www.aclunc.org/action/activist_toolkit/hosting_a_community_forum.shtml
- » *Narrative workshop guide for talking to others about the issue*
www.tear.org.au/static/files/resources/advocacyInfo-NarrativeWorkshop.pdf

STEP 5: ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

Addressing climate change not only requires us to make changes in our own lives and in our local communities, but to also examine the structural reasons as to why we are collectively locked into an environmentally damaging path. Campaigning for effective climate policies is therefore a key part of taking action on climate change. You can start with small steps like signing petitions and postcards, and as you gain confidence, learn how to write effective letters to MPs, visit your MPs and talk to them directly, or even organise your own campaign event, involving the wider community. There are many resources and organisations to help equip and support you. You don't need to be an expert to get involved in advocacy—the important thing for decision-makers like politicians to hear is that this is an issue that matters to you.

Structural change is a long and slow process—but every voice that speaks up counts and makes a difference in challenging what is unjust, even if we don't see results immediately. Advocacy about climate change is also about giving voice to those who do not have the opportunity to speak. The world's poorest people are those already most affected by climate change, though they have contributed the least to its causes. This is a matter of injustice for people in developing countries: we have a responsibility to be “truth-tellers” about this fact. As well as advocating to decrease our contribution to climate change, we also need to advocate that poor communities are given the support they need (in the most appropriate forms) to be able to cope with the changes brought about by climate change. Part of our responsibility as people of faith is to hold our decision-makers to account about how the most vulnerable people are being protected.

ARRCC's policy positions paper focuses on two areas:

- » **Mitigation:** policies focused on slowing and reducing our contribution to climate change.
- » **Adaptation:** assisting the world's poorest to be able to adapt and cope with the impacts of climate change as a matter of justice.

With your team, read ARRCC's policy positions paper, then consider and discuss the structures that your Buddhist community is a part of that relate to these policies, including:

- » **Your own Buddhist community and broader denominational structures:** Are there existing policies encouraging your Buddhist community to be more sustainable and consider its environmental impact? Is your temple's or your tradition's governing body investing ethically and using its collective voice to speak up about climate change?
- » **Local council:** Look into the environmental/climate change policies of your local council—are there goals to cut down the carbon emissions of your local area? Are they proactive in helping people in your local area to live sustainably; for example, do they make it easy for people to recycle and compost their waste and take part in sustainable initiatives?
- » **State Government:** Where does your State Member of Parliament stand on climate change issues, and how could they be encouraged to represent your concerns in Parliament? For example, are there adequate public transport options in your local area to encourage people to be less reliant on cars?
- » **Federal Government:** Find out where your local MP and their party stands on climate change issues and Australia's support for poor countries affected by climate change.

STEP 5: **ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE**

Help your community advocate:

- » Talk to your Buddhist community about why structural change is needed to tackle climate change. You might like to show a short DVD clip or share a story about how climate change impacts the world's poorest people.
- » Educate your Buddhist community about where Australia currently stands in its policy positions on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and ARRCC's policy recommendations.
- » Give your community a simple first step, like signing a petition, to get started in advocacy (see TEAR's website on how to start a petition).
- » Get your community to write letters to your Members of Parliament (perhaps at a suitable event) or explain during a service. You could provide a template or pre-printed card or letter and encourage people to add their own personal note about why they care and what they are doing in their own lives to become more sustainable. Handwritten letters make the most impact, because they show that real effort has gone into them.
- » Take a small delegation to visit your MP to discuss your concerns, ARRCC's policy positions, find out where your MP stands, and see how you can work together.
- » Host a discussion forum inviting a local councilor, your State MP and federal MP to share where they stand on climate change issues and facilitate a discussion with participants about how civil society and Government can work together for sustainability at local, state, national and global levels. Ask these politicians to make a response to ARRCC's policy positions. At the forum you could share what your Buddhist community has been doing to show their commitment to sustainability.

RESOURCES

- » *TEAR Australia's advocacy "how to" guides, including how to write a petition, visit politicians, research an issue and more*
www.tear.org.au/advocacy/issues/climate-justice
- » *Online petition platforms to start your own online campaign*
www.communityrun.org/ and www.change.org/en-AU
- » *UN Climate Trackers—online forum keeping you up to date on Australia's contribution through the UN to climate change mitigation and adaption*
www.climateactiontracker.org/countries/australia.html
- » *Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change*
www.ecobuddhism.org/bcp/all_content/buddhist_declaration

See the Tools for Advocacy section for more on how to get active in advocacy.



STEP 6: DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

The global fossil fuel divestment movement is the fastest growing divestment movement in history. An accelerating number of institutions and individuals are moving their money out of planet-heating fossil fuels and into climate solutions. Religious organisations can play a powerful role in moving Australia's economy out of fossil fuels and into clean energy.

Analysts have calculated how much more carbon humanity can afford to emit without overshooting the internationally accepted threshold of 2°C (*Unburnable Carbon 2013 report*, London). This is only one-fifth or so of current known oil, gas and coal reserves, yet the value of shares in mining companies is based on the assumption that all those reserves will be burnt. It is becoming increasingly well recognized that continuing to invest in these shares no longer meets a strong definition of "socially responsible". In Bill McKibben's now well-known words: "If it's wrong to wreck the planet, then it's wrong to profit from that wreckage."

Fossil fuel extraction companies have shown a lack of ethical integrity and transparency. The companies do not disclose the important systemic risks involved in fossil fuel reserves they hold which cannot safely be burnt. They continue to spend billions on further exploration and on unconventional fossil fuel extraction, eg, tar sands and coal seam gas which have even more dangerous environmental effects than conventional assets.

Finally, for decades the fossil fuel industry, including "Big Coal" in Australia, has funded climate denial think tanks and aggressively spread misinformation, for example, about "clean coal". Each year the industry routinely uses its considerable financial power to employ influential lobbyists to ensure legislation is passed which limits environmental action and maximizes its profits. At times, it mounts a public advertising campaign against such proposed legislation, usually with exaggerated claims of potential job losses. (See Guy Pearce, David McKnight & Bob Burton, *Big Coal*, UNSW, Sydney, 2013.)

Further resources on the moral case

- » For a more in-depth treatment of the moral argument for moving your money out of fossil fuels, see "Divest and Reinvest. Now." by Rev. Fletcher Harper of GreenFaith USA: greenfaith.org/programs/divest-and-reinvest/divest-and-reinvest-now.-greenfaiths-overview
- » For a specifically Christian perspective on the moral argument, including biblical references, see the "Bright Now" report of Operation Noah in the UK.
- » See 350.org's inspirational film clip: act.350.org/signup/math-movie/

Religious organisations that have divested from fossil fuels

ARRCC as an organisation switched to BankMECU in mid-2012, but the first large religious organization to pass a resolution to Go Fossil Free in Australasia was the **NSW/ACT Synod of the Uniting Church** in April 2013. Similar resolutions have since been passed by numerous other religious organisations, large and small.

Altogether well over one hundred religious organisations have passed resolutions to divest from fossil fuels, mostly in the USA, Australia and New Zealand. Many have been in the United Church of Christ, Unitarian and Episcopalian traditions, eg, Massachusetts United Church of Christ. The first Catholic University to decide to begin divesting from fossil fuels is Dayton University in the US. Others Universities have followed.

Increasingly, religious organisations in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia are joining the list. They include:

- » the **Anglican General Synod of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Polynesia** and each of the Anglican Dioceses
- » Moetzah, the Council of Progressive Rabbis of Australia, New Zealand and Asia
- » **Sydney Buddhist Centre** (first Buddhist organisation globally)
- » Unitarian Church of South Australia
- » **Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia**

STEP 6: DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

- » Uniting Church in Australia Assembly
- » Anglican Diocese of Canberra-Goulburn
- » Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
- » Uniting Church Synod of Western Australia
- » Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa/New Zealand
- » four Australian Catholic religious orders (and various other organisations since)

While these religious organisations are not large financially, their achievement is a moral one. They draw public attention to the immorality of the way fossil fuel industries pursue their profits and challenging their social license to operate.

Your faith community, place of worship, religious order, theological college or religious institution can join others taking a stand. People within your organization may express a variety of concerns. You will likely find that the paper prepared by those behind the Uniting Church decision address many of these concerns in their responses to objections raised: unitingearthweb.org.au/take-action/fossil-fuels/32-divestment-objections.html

Practicalities of divestment

It must be understood, we are not providing financial advice here. We are commenting on certain institutions on purely ethical grounds.

Many faith communities simply keep their money in a Bank. The Big Four banks, ANZ, Commonwealth, NAB and Westpac are the ones which invest most in fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure, whereas many of the smaller banks and credit unions have minimal exposure. If your organisation's money is in a conventional bank, especially one of the Big Four, you may wish to have a look at the Market Forces bank comparison list: www.marketforces.org.au/banks/compare and then various banks' credit ratings: www.relbanks.com/best-banks/australia

No bank is 100% fossil free but there are some which have minimal exposure to fossil fuels, such as Bendigo Bank, Bank Australia, Adelaide Bank, Newcastle Permanent, Victorian Teachers Mutual and Credit Union Australia and others on the Market Forces list.

To make your action more effective, remember to let your old institution know why you are moving your savings!

If your faith community or organisation is a small institutional investor, a phased approach is recommended, starting with the companies with most exposure to coal, oil and gas projects. The first step is to assess the level of exposure of various companies. The Australia Institute's full report, *Climate Proofing Your Investments*, categorises companies in tiers, from those with most exposure to those with least. The recommendation is to start by screening out investment in companies in tiers one and two in the first couple of years, and tiers three and four after that.

Divesting from fossil fuels is important in its own right, but there would be great benefit in also publicly announce such a move. Going public sends a message that industries which are causing environmental destruction should not enjoy the privileged place they have in society, thus challenging their social license to operate.

Reinvestment

Again, the following is not financial advice, but it's based on ethical considerations only. It is true to say that renewable energy companies in Australia have delivered high risk or low returns in recent years, because of an unstable regulatory environment. Internationally, however, renewable energy is generally lower risk. Also, re-investing responsibly could mean re-investing in a range of socially responsible options.

One possibility is to engage the services of an ethical investment firm which does screen out fossil fuels, such as Ethinvest, Australian Ethical or Ethical Investment Services in Melbourne.

Will this mean lower returns?

In a word, no. With the world's energy market in transition, already the results are showing up in returns for investors. The well-respected MSCI performance index demonstrates that investments excluding fossil fuels have produced better returns in recent years than those which have not. And yet, fund managers tend to hold on to the old ways.

If you'd like to see how much better off your organisation would have been if it had divested from fossil fuels three years ago, you can plug your equity portfolios into: www.decarbonizer.co

Advocacy

Divestment is not the only strategy available to achieve the desired goals. Religious institutional investors have been pre-disposed towards shareholder advocacy. The argument goes: While we remain shareholders or customers, our advocacy stands a much better chance of being successful. Shareholder advocacy is more in keeping with religious ethics than divestment.

However, there is no evidence that even the most determined advocacy will deliver the changes needed in the required time frame, according to Divest Invest Philanthropy which has documented a raft of examples.

Some companies may be open to influence, such as banks, super funds and insurance companies, but fossil fuel companies themselves have not responded substantially to shareholder advocacy to date. In Australia, the Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility is attempting to engage in shareholder advocacy with regard to fossil fuel investment by the "Big Four" Banks and is looking for various forms of support.

Advocacy has its place but tactically through dis-investing we believe that we can more effectively send a message to the wider community about the dangers of continuing with fossil fuels.

RESOURCES

See ARRC's resource here:

- » **Divest Invest Guide for Faith Based Organisations**—jointly published by The Climate Institute and ARRC in December, 2016
- » GreenFaith's Divest and Reinvest Now! With comprehensive global listing of all known religious fossil fuel divestment decisions, the wording of resolutions, Interfaith Statement endorsing divestment, and so on: www.greenfaith.org/programs/divest-and-reinvest

For more information, the papers and videos from the Divest-Invest Conference held in Sydney in April, 2016, are all on the website: www.divestinvest.org.au/conference-resources/

STEP 6: **DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS**

Divestment for individuals

Tell your financial institution/s that profiting from climate wreckage is morally unacceptable and financially risky. We have the opportunity to radically shift superannuation from the world's biggest fossil fuel investor to a climate change champion. To find out where your super is invested and how your fund is managing climate change risks, see www.superswitch.org.au/funds/.

If your money is with one of Australia's Big 4 banks, then you're investing in fossil fuel projects. Tell your bank to stop funding fossil fuel expansion and, if they take no action, commit to shifting to a better bank. For more about this visit: www.marketforces.org.au/campaigns/banks-new/.

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

The *Steps2Sustainability* program is about an ongoing, lifelong journey for your Buddhist community. It's not a linear process or a program with a finite end, but we hope you will continue to keep cycling through these steps, learning together and being transformed as a community and individually.

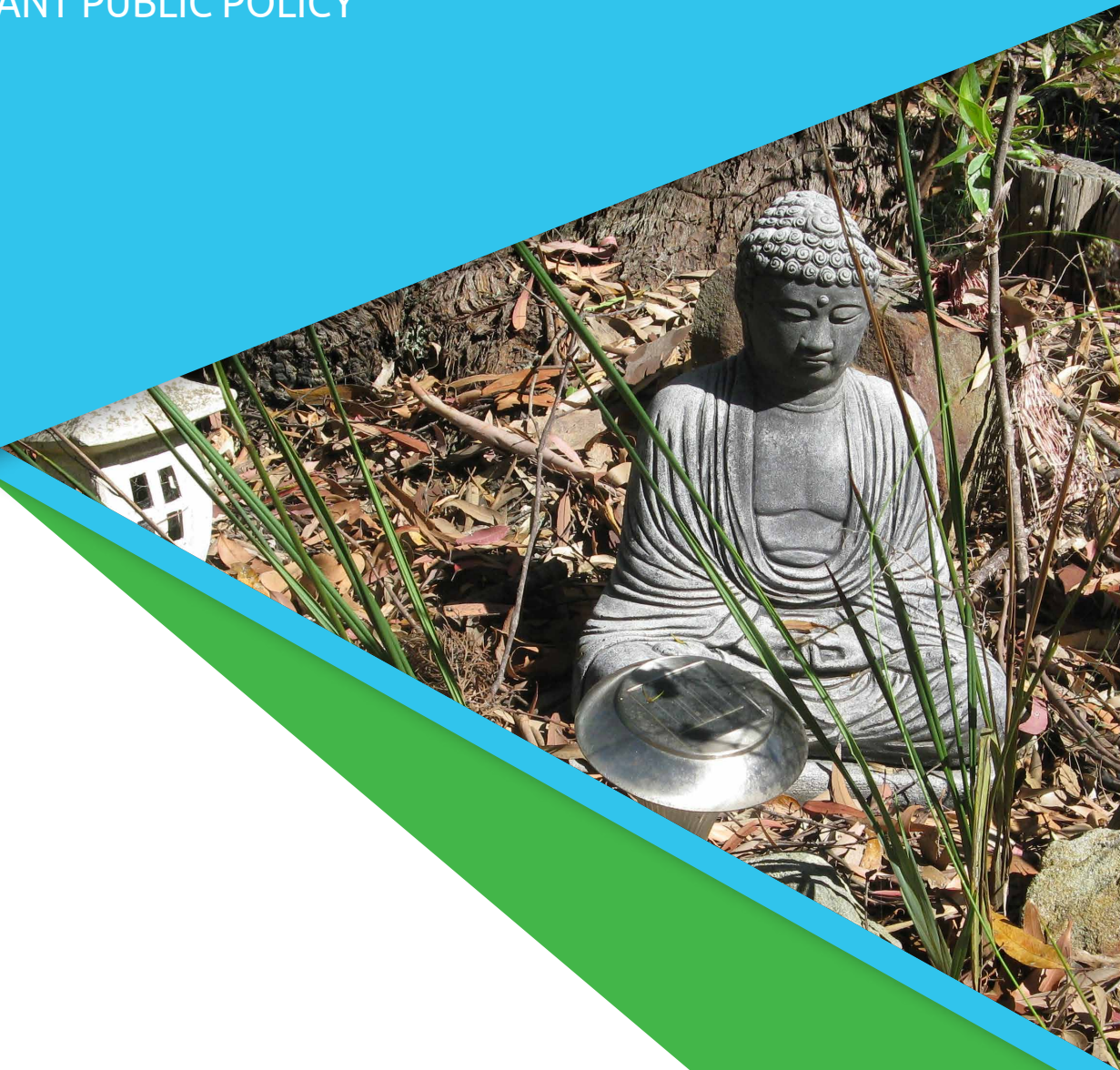
The benefits of living sustainably are endless, but the risks of not doing so include potentially catastrophic consequences, which are already beginning to be felt, especially by the most vulnerable across the globe. We hope that it will become the natural way of life for your Buddhist community to integrate thinking about sustainability in all your decisions collectively and individually. We also hope that you will find your relationships with the earth, each other and your spiritual path revitalised and enriched along the way. The future of our planet and future generations depends on this renewed way of living—but so does the spiritual, physical and environmental health of our current generation. We're sure the journey will be a rich one for you as you get into the different aspects of sustainability, and we look forward to hearing from you about it along the way.





Tools for learning

TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO HELP INFORM YOUR BUDDHIST COMMUNITY ABOUT THE SCIENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, THINK THROUGH WHY WE ALL HAVE A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT, AND UNDERSTAND THE KEY AREAS OF RELEVANT PUBLIC POLICY





ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE: THE SCIENCE

What is the 'greenhouse effect'?

In the 1890s, a Swedish scientist named Svante Arrhenius identified the natural greenhouse effect of atmospheric carbon dioxide and water vapour in the earth's atmosphere, enabling an average surface temperature of 15°C. Without this effect, the earth would be a very chilly -18°C. Arrhenius suggested that fossil fuel combustion might eventually increase CO₂ concentrations and lead to temperature rise.

The 'greenhouse effect' arises because gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and water vapour in the atmosphere trap some of the radiation from the sun, preventing it from radiating back into space. This warms the atmosphere and the surface of the planet.

After the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, the world's deposits of carbon-intense coal, oil and gas began to be burned, thus returning additional CO₂ to the atmosphere. Since the early 20th century, dramatic increases in the world's population and in further industrialization have led to increased levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere.

Research into ancient air bubbles trapped in ice tells us that levels of CO₂ are higher than they have been at any time in the past 400,000 years. During the ice ages, CO₂ levels were around 200 parts per million (ppm), and during the warmer interglacial periods, they hovered around 280 ppm. The last time CO₂ levels were this high, humans did not exist.

The other important greenhouse gases are methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O). These are more potent than CO₂ in their greenhouse impact. Methane is primarily produced from agricultural activities, especially animal grazing and fossil fuel use, and nitrous oxide is produced from agricultural activities. Atmospheric concentrations of these greenhouse gases are now far exceeding the natural range experienced over the last 650,000 years. Scientists anticipate that, as the planet warms, the permafrost (ground that has been permanently frozen) in Arctic regions will release large quantities of methane as it thaws. This is already beginning to happen.

Advancing the science

Much more progress was made in this field of research during the 1980s, when the global annual mean temperature started to rise. In 1988, the United Nations established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a scientific body tasked with reviewing and assessing the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide related to climate change.

Almost every major university and scientific institution around the world is undertaking research in at least one aspect of the changing climate and contributing to our overall understanding.

Over the last 20 odd years, the IPCC has produced a number of assessment reports that provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of climate change, its likely trajectory, and its potential environmental and socio-economic consequences. The comprehensive information in the IPCC reports is based on peer-reviewed, published scientific evidence from relevant experts from around the world. Each new assessment report reflects a progressive strengthening of our understanding of climate change.

In 2013, the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report concluded that warming of both the ocean and the atmosphere is 'unequivocal' with multiple lines of evidence showing that the earth's average surface temperature rose 0.78°C in the period from 1850 to 2012.

Scientific observations from NASA and the IPCC

- » At the time of writing, 2015 was the warmest year on record for the globe since reliable global surface air temperature records began in 1880. The previous 15 years were among the 16 warmest years on record.
- » Globally-averaged ocean temperatures are increasing. Observations reveal this warming extends to at least 2000m below the surface.
- » Globally-averaged sea level has risen over 20 cm since the late 19th century, with about one third of this rise due to ocean warming and the rest from melting land ice and changes in the amount of water stored on the land.
- » The Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have been losing mass in the last two decades and Arctic sea ice has continued to decrease in extent.

The human-induced activities of fossil fuel burning and agriculture, are responsible for about 98% of the global warming effect. Natural changes in solar activity and volcanic aerosols have made only a small contribution to the global warming effect, except for brief periods after large volcanic eruptions.

How Australia's climate is changing

The latest CSIRO/Bureau of Meteorology report, State of the Climate 2016, noted the following observed changes:

- » Australia's climate has warmed in both mean surface air temperature and surrounding sea surface temperature by around 1°C since 1910.
- » The duration, frequency and intensity of extreme heat events have increased across large parts of Australia, with concomitant increases in vulnerability to fire.
- » May–July rainfall has reduced by around 19 per cent since 1970 in the southwest of Australia.
- » There has been a decline of around 11 per cent since the mid-1990s in the April–October growing season rainfall in the continental southeast.
- » Rainfall has increased across parts of northern Australia since the 1970s.

Impacts of a warming climate

- » Glaciers everywhere are melting and disappearing fast, threatening the primary source of clean water for millions of people.
- » If emissions continue to track at the top of IPCC scenarios global average sea level could rise by nearly 1m by 2100. Sea level rise will continue for centuries to thousands of years even after greenhouse gas concentrations are stabilised due to the long lag times involved in warming of the oceans and the response of ice sheets.
- » Eventually, the sea level is expected to rise around 2.3m for every degree (°C) that climate change warms the planet, and Earth has warmed by over 1°C already. What scientists don't know is how long it will take. Given that most of the world's population and infrastructure are sited close to sea-level, the implications are serious.
- » The oceans are becoming more acidic because of the CO₂ they are absorbing, which makes it harder for animals like corals and clams to build their shells and exoskeletons. Together with the warming of the water, these two factors have led to the massive coral bleaching seen along the Great Barrier Reef.
- » A warmer atmosphere absorbs more water vapour and contains more energy, which leads to larger and more extreme weather events, both hot and cold. All around the world, extreme weather events (such as cyclones, typhoons, blizzards, droughts and heatwaves) are happening more frequently and/or with greater intensity.
- » The destabilized climate is making it harder to grow food in many areas.
- » Mosquitoes, which thrive in warmer temperatures, are spreading into new places, and bringing malaria and dengue fever with them.
- » Many species of animals are finding it impossible to adapt to the changing environments where they live. Extinctions are on the rise, and the biodiversity of regions is threatened.
- » Taken together, extreme weather, changes in water supplies and reductions in food production capacity are likely to result in greater tensions between communities in many regions, especially in regions that are already strapped for resources. Climate change is understood as a "threat multiplier".

How much warmer?

As discussed, 1°C warming has already been observed, and it is likely that another 0.5–1°C is already locked in as a result of the emissions already in the atmosphere and the warming in the oceans. The fact that the greenhouse gases have already passed 400ppm, and are still rising, has led scientists to conclude we are already above the safe zone, and that unless we are able to rapidly return to below 350 ppm this century, we risk at least a 2°C temperature rise, and quite possibly a 4°C average warming by the year 2100.

Many parts of the world would become uninhabitable under that scenario. Many are now rightly describing the situation as a “climate emergency”.

RESOURCES

- » Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO, *State of the Climate 2016*
www.csiro.au/state-of-the-climate
- » Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
www.ipcc.ch
- » Climate Council
www.climatecouncil.org.au/
- » Real Climate—climate science from working climate scientists
www.realclimate.org
- » Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
www.ocean.si.edu/sea-level-rise
- » The Climate Institute's Carbon 101
www.climateinstitute.org.au/carbon-101.html/section/458
- » Climate Council's website
www.climatecouncil.org.au/
- » United Nations climate change portal
www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change-2/

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Thank you to ARRC members, Catherine and David Rossiter, who provided the above material.



ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE: THE ETHICS

Climate change is not just a scientific issue—it is also an ethical one. Scientists may be examining how human activity is changing the earth’s climate and ecosystems. However, harm to the Biosphere, who or what benefits from such harm, and our part in the causes and solutions are deeply ethical matters. In addition to climate change, this also includes other harms associated with the sources of greenhouse gas emissions—such as the direct impacts of fossil fuel mining on water, human health and biodiversity.

For Buddhists, climate change can be seen primarily as an ethical issue for the following reasons:

1. Prosperous individuals, corporations and countries of the world contribute the most to the causes of climate change. They have a far higher consumption of energy and thus produce far more greenhouse gases than those poorer people and nations who will suffer most from the detrimental outcomes of climate change through no fault of their own. This is injustice on a global scale and cannot be accepted by Buddhism.
2. Loss of biodiversity means harming and taking the lives of sentient beings, which breaks the First Precept. By not attempting to restrain our consumption we are indirectly breaking this precept.
3. When our high levels of consumption and wastage contribute to extreme weather events, sea level rises in high population areas, crop failures and lack of water for drinking and agriculture, melting of glaciers and ice caps and rapid rise in land temperatures then we are in a real sense not keeping the Second Precept. We are taking far more than our share of the non-renewable, polluting energy of this planet that will cause huge suffering to millions of people.
4. When we know our high levels of consumption are causing harm across the biosphere and we continue our actions without any sort of restraint nor any attempt to curb our behaviour then we are not practising Right Intention, the second factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is intention of renunciation, intention of non-ill will and intention of non-harming. (SN 45:8, 8–10)
5. The antidotes for ill-will are loving kindness and compassion. To be a true Buddhist is to strive diligently to foster and practice thoughts, words and actions of kindness and compassion towards all living things. It is a deeply compassionate act for all sentient beings on earth to practice the restraint that is required to combat Climate Change. The Buddha taught that leading a balanced life, being neither miserly nor extravagant is one of the things that leads to a person’s welfare and happiness in this life. Practice of moral discipline, including not taking any life and not taking anything that is not given, and practicing generosity and restraint, lead to one’s welfare and happiness in the next life. (AN 8-54)
6. Outcomes that arise from choices in the present reduce choices for future generations.

Impacts on people

The melting of polar ice means that low-lying land such as atolls in the Pacific and Indian Oceans (e.g. Kiribati, Tuvalu and Maldives) and delta areas (e.g. in Bangladesh, Vietnam and Thailand) are gradually being inundated by rising sea levels, causing coastal erosion and salination of fresh water supplies and increased soil salinity, leading to failure of crops, and in some cases already leading to partial or full evacuation of the islands.

In other parts of the world, increased droughts and changing rainfall make it very hard for farmers to know when to plant and when to harvest their crops, as both wet and dry weather is required at different times in the planting cycle to ensure a good crop. Marginal rice growing areas of Sri Lanka are already experiencing decreases in harvest due to consistently lower rainfalls attributed to Climate Change. Further, the changing temperatures also affect the ability of crops to survive and thrive, particularly those that are only suited to either warm or cold climates. This not only affects poorer farmers’ ability to earn a living, but for subsistence farmers affects their very ability to feed themselves.

The changing rainfall patterns, shrinking glaciers and the effects of these on river systems, also affect the abilities of communities to maintain a supply of fresh drinking water. This is a particular issue in Australia as well as around the world. However in poorer countries the effects of lack of fresh water sources are often much greater as alternatives are not readily available or affordable. This leads to large increases in health problems, whether caused by dehydration and heat stroke or by water-borne diseases and illnesses such as diarrhoea, which is the greatest killer of children under 5 in the world.

Other health problems also arise from the general increasing temperatures which is causing a spread of the tropical zones further out from the equator. This leads to an increased spread in tropical diseases into communities that have previously had no exposure to the disease and therefore have developed no immunity. Malaria, endemic in most Buddhist countries, is a particular example of this.

Social problems also arise from the decrease in arable land and particularly the supply of fresh water, both of which see large numbers of people moving away from their homelands in search of better livelihoods elsewhere. This may result in a large rural-urban migration as people descend on already highly populated cities, great internal displacement as people are forced to move between different regions within a country, or even international migration as people cross borders into other countries. In addition to the tensions and unrest this can cause, fighting can also break out over the control of precious resources.

People as the cause and the solution

The science is clear that people are the cause of the climate change challenges that we are seeing today and into the future. People in developed countries have contributed the most to climate change, while the people in developing countries, who have contributed the least, suffer the greatest consequences of climate change.

A just response in this situation requires not only that the global community, and especially developed countries, do everything we can to mitigate climate change and help poor countries adapt, but we also need to take a long hard look at the root of the issue. The system of ever-increasing consumption in developed countries is simply not sustainable for our planet, and until we can acknowledge this and change our way of thinking and living, we will continue on the same destructive path. We need to fundamentally change our relationship with the earth, from one of Exploitation and consumption to a relationship of respect, care, protection and stewardship.

When we take action to reduce our consumption it will help mitigate some of the above impacts by reducing climate change, but it can also have direct beneficial impacts on poor communities. For example, when we choose to eat less meat, reducing the demand, then not only will methane emissions from livestock be reduced, but the cereals and grains which are used to feed these livestock will no longer be diverted from feeding poor communities struggling with food security.

RESOURCES

- » *ABC Religion and Ethics article "Faith must confront climate change with a single moral voice"*
www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2012/07/13/3545416.htm
- » *Article: "NASA scientist: climate change is a moral issue on a par with slavery"*
www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/apr/06/nasa-scientist-climate-change
- » *UN Videos on the human cost of climate change*
www.oxfam.org.au/what-we-do/food-and-climate/what-you-can-do-2/sisters-on-the-planet/
- » *World Vision's resources on Climate Change and poverty*
www.worldvision.com.au/issues/Climate_Change.aspx
- » *Caritas' Our Common Home: Calling for climate justice*
www.caritas.org.au/act/our-common-home
- » *Oxfam videos on the Faces of Climate Change*
www.oxfam.org.au/explore/climate-change/what-oxfam-is-doing/faces-of-climate-change
- » *Prudence, Poverty, the Common Good, and Solidarity—Catholic teaching on climate change*
www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/

ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE: PUBLIC POLICY

ARRCC believes that an effective response to climate change needs to be communal as well as individual, as societal structures that promote unsustainable consumption need to be regulated and economies need to be redirected away from the pursuit of unlimited economic “growth” and towards new understandings of prosperity.

The following is a summary of ARRCC’s public policy positions:

In the area of climate change, ARRCC holds that the following are the policies which best reflect the values held dear by people of various religious traditions: compassion, human fulfilment, justice, truth-telling and respect for life.

...A moral collective response to climate change will involve the urgent scaling up of energy generation from renewable sources and the phasing out of coal, both as an export and a fuel source. It will involve the elimination of counter-productive subsidies for carbon-intensive industries. These should be replaced with investment in renewable energy and incentives to pursue a low carbon future, including carbon pricing.

ARRCC also advocates for a range of measures such as instituting stronger mandatory energy efficiency standards, encouraging Australians to reduce their meat intake and ending the logging of old growth forests. Those with vested interests will insist these kinds of measures will be economically disastrous. On the contrary, they have potential to create new employment opportunities and ultimately protect the ecosystems on which life itself depends.

In international negotiations, Australia should set a much higher emissions reduction target and renewable energy target, and advocate for a binding agreement to keep global warming at no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. As the OECD nation with the highest per capita emissions and a country with the capacity to change, we have a moral obligation to do so.

We should also provide considerable financial assistance to developing countries to help them adapt to climate change, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of justice. The assistance we offer should be in the order of billions of dollars annually, and it should be in addition to existing overseas development assistance. It should be administered through partnerships which give credit to the local knowledge and resilience of people in developing countries. Australia should furthermore advocate for other ways of increasing the capacity of developing countries to adapt, such as the creation of innovative financing mechanisms and the cancellation of odious international debts.

For the full Public Policy Positions document, see www.arrcc.org.au/policy-positions

RESOURCES

- » *Oxfam Australia: Reports and resources*
www.oxfam.org.au/what-we-do/food-and-climate/reports-and-resources/
- » *Doing further research—TEAR Australia’s guide on how to research an issue*
www.tear.org.au/resources/advocacy-guide-how-to-research-an-issue/





Tools for reflection

TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO HELP YOUR BUDDHIST COMMUNITY REFLECT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND CREATION AND THE CONNECTION TO THEIR FAITH, INCLUDING STATEMENTS BY FAITH LEADERS, PRAYERS AND SERMON OUTLINES



YOUR RELIGION: STATEMENTS BY BUDDHIST TEACHERS AND LEADERS

In this action kit, we have collected some statements by our teachers to articulate messages and teachings around caring for the natural world. There are many statements made by teachers and schools of Buddhism and Buddhist groups that are poignant and relevant but not well known, even among the most dedicated Buddhists and Dharma practitioners. Below are just a few examples.

Australian statements

» **Excerpt from Statement of the Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils, 5 November, 2015**

For the benefit of all beings the Australian Buddhist community urges world leaders meeting in Paris this year to reduce the mining and use of coal and other fossil fuels. Instead of increased coal production we encourage the Australian government to actively pursue the development of renewable energy technologies and help developing countries toward the same end. In the face of overwhelming scientific consensus, urgent action is needed to avoid the catastrophic damage to the earth that climate change will bring if not halted.

Coal is the dirtiest fossil fuel. Besides contributing to carbon dioxide production it causes enormous damage to human health and local ecosystems. The leadership of every nation of the world is needed now more than ever to help transition the world from coal power to renewable clean energy ...

» www.buddhistcouncil.org.au/fed/home/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=41&Itemid=2

Other Australian statements

» **Ajahn Brahm—Taken from a Dhamma talk given by Ajahn Brahm in Perth in January 2014**

Desire has created the problem of Climate Change—the desire to have, to possess to control. Desire is also the solution—the desire to fix the problem, the desire to solve it. So we just have to put our desire in a more positive way, to use our aspirations and energies and efforts and of course it can be done. The solutions are there.

Take away this hard materialistic view about life; about your own body and mind; about our universe and especially this earth to get some more sensitivity around Climate Change. It will actually change one's attitude, change one's lifestyle, change the way you look at things. And when you change perceptions, that is when actions start to change.

International statements

» **The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change, May 14, 2015 (excerpt)**
fore.yale.edu/files/Buddhist_Climate_Change_Statement_5-14-15.pdf

We have a brief window of opportunity to take action, to preserve humanity from imminent disaster and to assist the survival of the many diverse and beautiful forms of life on Earth. Future generations, and the other species that share the biosphere with us, have no voice to ask for our compassion, wisdom, and leadership. We must listen to their silence. We must be their voice, too, and act on their behalf.



TOOLS FOR REFLECTION

» **Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective: an excerpt from Statement to World Leaders, October 29, 2015**
gbccc.org/

We call on world leaders to recognize and address our universal responsibility to protect the web of life for the benefit of all, now and for the future.

... we call on all Parties in Paris:

1. *To be guided by the moral dimensions of climate change as indicated in Article 3 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).*
2. *To agree to phase out fossil fuels and move towards 100 percent renewables and clean energy.*
3. *To create the political will to close the emissions gap left by country climate pledges so as to ensure that the global temperature increase remains below 1.5 degrees Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels.*
4. *To make a common commitment to increase finance above the US\$100 billion agreed in Copenhagen in 2009, including through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to help vulnerable developing countries prepare for climate impacts and transition towards a low-carbon economy.*

The time to act is now.

» **Master Cheng Yen, Tzu Chi Foundation—Protecting the environment begins with cultivating the mind. Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen**

www.us.tzuchi.org/us/en/images/stories/Publications/e-books/us_journal/2013Summer/2013summer.html

Though global warming is certainly too large a task for any of us to tackle alone, Dharma Master Cheng Yen often reminds us that “many drops of water come together to make a river,” and that “tiny droplets of love have the collective power to achieve great things.” She emphasizes that though “time is running out,” it has not yet passed us by completely.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen advises us that disasters serve to awaken awareness, so we should see Hurricane Sandy as an opportunity to re-evaluate the wastefulness in our lives. As we uncover and implement ways to reduce our impact on the environment, we can mitigate future disasters and create a safer world for future generations.

» **HH The Dalai Lama—Endorsement of 350ppm upper limit on atmospheric CO₂**

Right now our greatest responsibility is to undo the damage done by the introduction of fossil carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and climate system during the rise of human civilization.

We know that we have already exceeded the 350 parts per million that is a safe level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. In doing so, we have ushered in a global climate crisis. This is evident from the frequent extreme weather events we witness around us, the unprecedented melting of the Arctic sea-ice and of the great Tibetan glaciers at the Earth's Third Pole.

It is now urgent that we take corrective action to ensure a safe climate future for coming generations of human beings and other species. That can be established in perpetuity if we can reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide to 350ppm. Buddhists, concerned people of the world and all people of good heart should be aware of this and act upon it.

20 December 2008

For more Buddhist Statements, see: fore.yale.edu/climate-change/statements-from-world-religions/buddhism/

RESOURCES:

- » *Dharma Teachers Statement—Earth as Witness*
buddhistglobalrelief.me/?s=earth+as+witness

YOUR RELIGION: DHARMA PRACTICE—MEDITATION, CONTEMPLATION AND REFLECTION

There are many ways that we practice Dharma. Meditation, the eighth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path is fundamental to awakening. Universally acknowledged as being of great benefit for almost anyone, it is through meditation that we develop the clarity and wisdom we need to deal with difficulties like Climate Change.

Reflection on Dharma texts—be they teachings of the Buddha or his great disciples are essential in helping us to contextualise and apply the teachings in our modern world while at the same time retaining the true values at the heart of the Dharma. The Buddha said that the Dhamma is timeless, apparent here and now and encourages investigation. The Dharma then becomes a vast store of wisdom that we can dip into again and again for solutions to how we can respond to the diverse problems brought about by climate change.

Below are a few examples of stories, teachings and prayers from various traditions. Some are quite modern—some are from the Buddha himself, and you might find it helpful to write or adapt one for your community:

Samudda Vanija Jataka 454—Merchants at Sea Jataka

In a previous life the Buddha applies the precautionary principle and saves his community from destruction by rising sea levels. This tale uncannily encapsulates the human greed and heedlessness that are the causes for harming of the natural world and for Climate Change.

Cakkavattisihananda Sutra—The Lion's Roar on the Turning of the Wheel— Digha Nikaya 26

Among many other things this detailed narrative sutra establishes a direct causal link between human unethical conduct, especially of leaders, and the gradual decline of 'civilization' into anarchy and intense suffering. It also narrates the arising out of suffering and the growth of happiness directly dependant on kindness and good ethical conduct.

Mahahatthipadopama Sutra—Greater Discourse on the Elephants Footprint— Majjhima Nikaya 28

Predicts the rising and falling sea level of the great oceans.

YOUR RELIGION: ASPIRATIONAL PRAYERS

Translated by Gyurme Dorje

» **An Aspiration Concerning Global Warming by Thrangu Rinpoche**

May the blessings of the exalted sources of refuge,
The Buddha, his teachings and community: the Three Precious Jewels,
And the spiritual teacher, meditational deities and protectors of the Buddhist teachings: the Three Roots,
Fully pacify the terrors of illness, famine and war,
Along with chaotic disturbances of the four elements—
The imminent and terrifying danger that the whole world will become a great wasteland,
As temperature imbalance causes the solid glaciers of snow mountain massifs to melt and contract,
Afflicting rivers and lakes, so that primeval forests and beautiful trees near their deaths!
May the sublime endowments of good fortune and spiritual and temporal well-being flourish,
And may all beings nurture one another lovingly and kindly,
So that their joy may fully blossom!
May all their aims be fulfilled, in accordance with the sacred teachings!

*At the request of the scientist John Stanley, a student of the Lord of Refuge
Dudjom Rinpoche, this aspirational prayer was composed by Tranguwa.*



TOOLS FOR REFLECTION

» **A Prayer at a Time of Ecological Crisis—**
Chatral Rinpoche

Sugatas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions,
Turn your enlightened intention towards us!
May all sentient beings tormented by this present age
Of the five virulent degenerations,
Know that they possess a treasure that can alleviate
The various portents of decay in the physical world
and its inhabitants
Due to the ripening of their wrong intentions and
actions—
A treasure grounded in the renunciation of harmful
actions
And the cultivation of altruistic actions,
Granting all the spiritual and temporal wellbeing one
could desire.
This is the supreme wish-fulfilling gem of good heart
Associated with all supreme spiritual practices.

Endowed with this (good heart),
May all beings cultivate love and compassion for
one another,
Without hatred, and without fighting or quarrelling.
May they enjoy the glorious resources of
happiness—
All they could possibly desire,
And swiftly attain the level of conclusive
omniscience!

*This aspirational prayer was written by Sangye Dorje
on the tenth day of the second lunar month of the Fire
Pig year at the insistence of Dungse Kunzang Jigme
Namgyal, who presented a 'good day' offering scarf.
May it be auspicious!*
(Taken from www.ecobuddhism.org/)

» **The Metta Sutta: Loving Kindness for All Beings**
The Buddha—Sutta Nipata

This is what should be done by one who is filled
with goodness
And who knows the path of peace.
Let them be able and uprights, straightforward and
gentle in speech;
Humble and not conceited, contented and easily
satisfied;
Not busy with duties and frugal in their ways;
Peaceful and calm and wise and skilful, not proud
and demanding in nature;
Let them not do the slightest things that the wise
would later reprove;
Wishing in gladness and in safety, may all beings be
happy!
Let none deceive another, nor despise any being in
any state;
Let none through anger or ill-will wish harm upon
another.
Even as a mother protects with her life her child, her
only child,
So with a boundless heart should one cherish all
living beings,
Radiating kindness throughout the entire world;
spreading upwards to the sky
And downwards to the depths, outwards and
unbounded, free from hatred and ill-will,
Whether standing or walking, seated or lying
down—free from drowsiness,
One should sustain this recollection. It is said to be
the sublime abiding.
By not holding to false views the pure-hearted one
having clarity of vision,
Being freed from all sense desires, is not born again
into this world.

YOUR RELIGION: BUDDHISM: QUOTES FROM THE BUDDHA AND GREAT TEACHERS

On the responsibility to speak out:

... beings are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions; they originate from their actions, are bound by their actions, have their actions as their refuge. It is action that distinguishes beings as inferior or superior.

This is the way that leads to long life, namely abandoning the destruction of life, one abstains from the destruction of life; with rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious, merciful, one dwells compassionate to all living beings.
(Majjhima Nikaya 135)

Suffering and its origin:

Now this Bhikkhus is the Noble truth of Suffering; Birth is suffering; aging is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering.

Now this Bhikkhus is the noble truth of the origin of suffering; it is this craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for non-existence. (Samyutta Nikaya 5-56-11)

Generosity:

If people knew as I know, the result of giving and sharing, they would not eat without having given, nor would they allow the stain of niggardliness to obsess them and take root in their minds. Even if it were their last morsel, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared it, if there were someone to share it with. (Itivutakka 26 18-19)

Contentment:

*When one is content with what is blameless,
Trifling and easily gained;
When one's mind is not distressed
Because of a lodging,
Robe, drink and food,
One is not hindered anywhere. Angutterra Nikaya 4-27*

One who becomes a forest dweller for the sake of fewness of desires, for the sake of contentment, for the sake of eliminating defilements, for the sake of solitude, for the sake of simplicity, is the foremost, the best, the preeminent, the supreme, and the finest of these five kinds of forest dwellers. Angutterra Nikaya 5-181

On the task of Buddhism:

During the Buddha's lifetime the countries of the Ganges Valley were subject to much change and unrest with various kingdoms and republics vying for power. Although Buddhist monastics were not involved in these machinations, yet the Buddha praised those countries that acted in accordance with the Dhamma and he gave a lot of general advice on how householders and kings should behave and conduct their affairs so as to uphold the Dhamma and just, harmonious societies. By understanding and living according to the Four Noble truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, Buddhists are powerful examples of goodness in Australian society. Every factor of the eightfold path can be used as a support to lead us towards skillful actions necessary to combat climate change.

On good governance:

... Ananda, as long as the Vajjians, hold regular and frequent assemblies they may be expected to prosper and not decline... Ananda, as long as the Vajjians meet in harmony, break up in harmony, and carry out their business in harmony, ... do not authorize what has not been authorized already and proceed according to what has been authorized according to their ancient tradition, ... they honour, revere and respect the elders among them, and consider them worth listening to, ... that they do not forcibly abduct others' wives and daughters and compel them to live with them, ... that they honour, respect, revere and salute the Vajjian shrines at home and abroad, not withdrawing the proper support made and given before, ... that proper provision is made for the safety of arahants, so that such arahants may come in future and live there and those already there may dwell in comfort...' Digha Nikaya 16

Cakkavattisihananda Sutra—The Lion's Roar on the Turning of the Wheel—Digha Nikaya 26

Among many other things this detailed narrative sutra establishes a direct causal link between human unethical conduct, especially of leaders, and the gradual decline of 'civilization' into anarchy and intense suffering. It also narrates the arising out of suffering and the growth of happiness directly dependant on kindness and good ethical conduct.

Finding new ways forward:

The Buddha shows a radical way of solving calamity in this exert from the Kutadanta Sutta: The Buddha tells the story of a very rich king who wanted to make a great sacrifice and asked his chaplain how to go about it.

The chaplain replied: "Your Majesty's country is beset by thieves, it is ravaged, villages and towns are being destroyed, the countryside is infested with brigands; If your Majesty were to tax this region, that would be the wrong thing to do. If Your Majesty were to think; 'I will get rid of this plague of robbers by executions and imprisonment, or by confiscation, threats and banishment', the plague would not be properly ended. Those who survived would later harm Your Majesty's realm. However, with this plan you can completely eliminate the plague. To those in the kingdom who are engaged in cultivating crops and raising cattle, let Your Majesty distribute grain and fodder; to those in trade, give capital; to those in government service assign proper living wages. Then those people, being intent on their own occupations, will not harm the kingdom. Your Majesty's revenues will be great, the land will be tranquil and not beset by thieves, and the people, with joy in their hearts, will play with their children, and will dwell in open houses." Digha Nikaya 5-11.

YOUR RELIGION: BUDDHISM: TEACHINGS

Our action on climate change needs to be an integral part of how we live the Dhamma today. It needs to be informed by the practice, reflections and conversation of the community.

Here are some possible Dhamma talk and discussion ideas and outlines to work on:

RESOURCES

The ARRC website provides a number of tools help you and your temple take practical action together. Many of these resources have first been used for Christian communities and churches but they can be easily adapted for Buddhist groups.

- » *Dhamma talk on climate change given by Ajahn Brahm at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre January 2014*
Video www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk4_BiXb7Wk&list=UU6M_EhnSSdTG_SXUp6IAWmQ
 - » *Dhamma talk on climate change given by Bhante Sujato at Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre January 2014*
Video www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-hjKltFbCQ&list=UU6M_EhnSSdTG_SXUp6IAWmQ
 - » *Buddhist Teachings on the Environment*
greenfaith.org/religious-teachings/buddhist-statements-on-the-environment and www.ecobuddhism.org/
 - » *Bhikkhu Bodhi Fire Sermon*
www.parabola.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=302:reflections-on-the-fire-sermon
 - » *Buddhism and the Climate-Energy Emergency*
www.ecobuddhism.org/wisdom/editorials/bcee
- Taking action for climate change can have immediate impacts, as well as longer term impacts on poor communities.
- » *Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change:*
www.ecobuddhism.org/bcp/all_content/buddhist_declaration
 - » *Buddhism and the Climate Change Emergency:*
www.ecobuddhism.org
 - » *Buddhist advocate groups for action on Climate Change:*
www.oneearthsangha.org and www.huffingtonpost.com/james-baraz/earth-care-week_b_4027510.html
 - » *Buddhist Attitude Towards Nature, Lily de Silva:*
www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/desilva/attitude.html
 - » *ABC Religion and Ethics article "Faith must confront climate change with a single moral voice":*
www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2012/07/13/3545416.htm
 - » *World Vision's resources on Climate Change and poverty:*
www.worldvision.com.au/global-issues/work-we-do/climate-change
 - » *Oxfam videos on the Faces of Climate Change:*
www.oxfam.org.au/explore/climate-change/what-oxfam-is-doing/faces-of-climate-change

Tools for action

EACH OF STEPS2SUSTAINABILITY SUGGESTS A NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES TO GET YOU STARTED TAKING ACTION. THE FOLLOWING IS A 'LIBRARY' OF RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO KEEP YOU GOING—REMEMBER THESE ARE JUST A START, AND THE SKY IS THE LIMIT HOW FAR YOU WANT YOUR IMPACT TO REACH IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY AND HOW CREATIVE YOU WANT TO BE



RESOURCES FROM ARRCC

The ARRCC website provides a number of tools help you and your Buddhist group take practical action together.

- » **Going “green” collectively**
Tips on making large and small carbon savings as a faith community
www.arrcc.org.au/inform_your_faith_community
- » **Going “green” for householders**
Tips on going green as an individual or household
www.arrcc.org.au/resources_for_individual_lifestyle_choices
- » **Meat Free Day campaign**
Resources on how and why to introduce a Meat Free Day into your faith community
www.arrcc.org.au/eat-less-meat
- » **Walk or Ride to Worship campaign**
Resources on how to run a Ride to Worship day in your faith community
www.arrcc.org.au/walk_or_ride_to-worship
- » **Celebrating lightly**
Ideas on how to lower the ecological footprint of celebrations in your faith community
www.arrcc.org.au/celebrate_lightly
- » **Repower Worship**
An introduction to energy efficiency and renewable energy for your place of worship
www.arrcc.org.au/repower-worship
- » **GreenPower Fact Sheet**
Tips for switching your place of worship to Green Power
www.arrcc.org.au/new_greenpowerfactsheet

MORE RESOURCES

- » Collaborative consumption websites for ideas and networks to share appliances and resources:
www.greenvillages.com.au/green-tips/our-top-collaborative-consumption-sites and www.collaborativeconsumption.com/index.php
- » Carbon Footprint calculator to measure your own impact
www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx
- » Green Tips for your household from the City of Sydney Council
www.greenvillages.com.au/category/green-tips/
- » Accessing locally grown food:
 - Local Farmers Markets directory
www.farmersmarkets.org.au/markets
 - Food Connect
www.foodconnect.com.au
 - Harvest Hub
www.harvesthub.com.au
 - Aussie Farmers Direct
www.aussiefarmers.com.au
- » Find out about grants you could access for your faith community to become more sustainable: Grants and rebates for communities
www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/grant_main.jsp
www.climatechange.gov.au/government/programs-and-rebates.aspx
- » Check your local council for Green Matching Grants for the community, eg
www.greenvillages.com.au/?s=grant
- » PermaBlitz—how to get people together to set up a food garden at one person’s home in a day
www.permablitz.net
- » Australian City Farms and Community Garden Network
www.communitygarden.org.au
- » How to start and manage a community garden
www.greenvillages.com.au/?category_name=green-tips&tag=community-gardens
- » Sustainability Street—how to get your street working together to become more sustainable
www.sustainabilitystreet.org.au/





Tools for advocacy

ADVOCACY IS ABOUT BEING INVOLVED IN CREATING SOCIAL CHANGE, AND CAN RANGE FROM STARTING WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS TO CHANGE OUR PRACTICES, TO CHALLENGING UNJUST STRUCTURES AND POLICIES LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND GLOBALLY



SPEAK OUT: INTRODUCTION

Advocacy is about being involved in creating social change. It is about challenging cultures and structures that perpetuate injustice and an unsustainable pathway. Doing advocacy means being active citizens, and taking up our part in holding decision makers to account to ensure the policies and structures at all levels of our society consider the impact on the earth.

As people of faith, part of our responsibility is to help look after our world, passing it on in good order for those who come after us. While we do this through the way we live, as a faith group we are also called to engage in the process of social change, which is political in the broad sense. This is a profoundly moral engagement.

The first and most important step in becoming involved is to educate ourselves on the issues. Rely on sources which reflect the consensus among reputable climate scientists and/or are informed by Christian values. See the section on science of climate change for specific recommendations.

There are many resources available to equip you to get involved in advocacy, from how to talk to your friends and family, through to challenging unjust structures at a local and global level.

SPEAK OUT: TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Advocacy begins with the conversations we have every day with the people around us. We don't all have to be experts on climate science to be able to speak up—it can start with simply sharing that climate change is something we see as being important to act on, and sharing some of the reasons and motivations behind some of the lifestyle changes you are making.

We can point people to the reports by reputable climate scientists. However, the area that is probably furthest from people's awareness, is how climate change is impacting the world's poorest the most, though they have contributed the least to the causes—and it is already affecting their water supplies and crop cycles. It is important that we share stories about these communities—because our communities are connected to theirs, and our actions have real implications for their lives.

RESOURCES

- » *TEAR Australia's guide to telling our own story on climate change:*
www.tear.org.au/static/files/resources/advocacyInfo-NarrativeWorkshop.pdf
- » *Tips from Communications expert George Marshall*
www.desmog.uk/2016/05/11/george-marshall-interview-engaging-conservatives-on-climate-change



SPEAK OUT: IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

You may find that there are people in your local community already passionate and active about sustainability, and getting together with them to take action can help build the momentum needed to change the culture, practices and policies in your neighbourhood. There may be existing initiatives you can join and support, or events that you can host or co-host to get the conversation and action happening.

Ideas of outreaching to other communities, whether they are local or global:

- » Let other communities know what you are doing to care for Creation, through the internet, personal contact or through faith-based or local media.
- » Hold a film night and invite congregants from other local communities.
- » Hold a public forum on climate change, with guest speakers, including your local MP.
- » Get your Buddhist group involved with a community event.
- » Get your Buddhist community involved in a faith-based network which is working on environmental issues, such as ARRCC or the environmental network based at the Sydney Buddhist Centre.
- » Promote and champion a “climate change response” in the broader community.
- » You could include fundraising for projects assisting poor communities affected by climate change.

SPEAK OUT: TO YOUR LOCAL MP

This is one of the most effective ways available to attempt to influence policy. When a voter in an electorate visits their MP, they are understood to represent the views of many others who feel the same way but haven’t organised themselves to actually visit. Personal contact gives a human face to a viewpoint and is usually more powerful than a letter.

Be polite and respectful, but don’t be side-tracked. Be familiar with the arguments and what is being called for by like-minded people. Your message would be different, depending on which party your MP belongs to. Be clear on your message and what you are asking the MP to do. For contact details of the MP for your area, look up the Australian Electoral Commission website: www.aec.gov.au.

Be creative in your engagement with your MP. MPs are bombarded with reports and words, so perhaps you could take them something tangible like a pot of herbs to keep in their office to remind them of what you have asked them to do, or something that has been signed by members of your Buddhist community to show the level of support for the issue. You could invite them to take part in a community event where they speak about their perspective on the issue, or take part in a practical green activity with you.

RESOURCES

- » *ARRCC’s Politician letter guide*
www.arrcc.org.au/write_to_your_politician

TOOLS FOR REFLECTION

SPEAK OUT: TO A PROBLEM CORPORATE ENTITY

Campaigning organisations like ARRCC, 350.org, Lock the Gate, Market Forces, Greenpeace and others are often targeting corporate entities that are acting against the common good. It may be an Oil Giant wanting to drill in the Great Australian Bight; it may be a Big Bank which is funding new fossil fuel mining projects; it may be an energy company which is keeping old coal-powered energy generators going; it may be a company which is providing services for a destructive mining project. Corporations are generally protective of their public reputation, so sensitive to public criticism. Public pressure has resulted in hundreds of wins for the environment.

Campaigning organisations can usually only be effective if they can mobilise broad public support. They provide interesting films, training, support to enable local groups to speak out. It can be most enriching for your volunteers to receive training in being effective change agents on issues they care about. By getting behind existing campaigns, your locally based group can celebrate victories from time to time. Along the way your group can build skills, friendships and confidence. And you can make a difference.

ADVOCACY RESOURCES:

- » *Local media contacts*
www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1423
- » *Writing an effective media release*
www.tear.org.au/resources/working-with-the-media-guide and
www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1575
- » *The Change Agency's campaign planning resources*
www.thechangeagency.org/page/1/?s=planning+a+campaign
- » *TEAR Australia's advocacy "how to" guides, including how to write a petition, visit politicians, research an issue and more*
www.tear.org.au/advocacy/issues/climate-justice
- » *Our Community's Community Advocacy Centre resources*
www.ourcommunity.com.au/advocacy/advocacy_main.jsp
- » *Online petition platforms to start your own online campaign*
www.communityrun.org/ and www.change.org/en-AU



SPEAK OUT: IN THE FORM OF PEACEFUL PROTEST

Peaceful protest is widely recognised in robust democracies as one form of action available to citizens whereby they can take a stand against unjust laws and wealthy corporations. Protest can take the form of, for example, rallies, marches, prayer vigils, street theatre and ceremonial presentations to community leaders.

These actions dramatize a social wrong, draw public attention to it and challenge bystanders, whether physically present or via social and mainstream media, to decide where they stand. They can be particularly creative, challenging, empowering and just plain fun.

For some people, their conscience leads them to go further than conventional forms of protest through sit-ins, blockades and so on. They believe that the legal system is being used to support structures which perpetrate injustice. Australia is not immune from such injustice. However, when considering protests which may invoke legal sanctions, it is imperative that participants receive training in principles of nonviolence. This is not only because nonviolence is consistent with our Buddhist values on loving everyone, but also because it is only nonviolent protest which wins public support.

Disclaimer: ARRCC supports free speech and an individual's right to protest on issues they care about. However, ARRCC does not support or promote the breaking of laws, and cannot take responsibility for individuals who take action that lead to their arrest as part of peaceful protest activities.

Campaigns you can get involved in:

- » *Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC)*
www.arrcc.org.au/advocate and www.arrcc.org.au/go-fossil-free
- » *100% Renewable Energy*
www.solarcitizens.org.au
- » *Greenpeace Climate campaigns*
www.greenpeace.org/australia/en/what-we-do/climate/
- » *GetUp—online campaigns*
www.getup.org.au/campaigns
- » *Australian Youth Climate Coalition—a youth run climate change campaign*
www.aycc.org.au

Organisations that can run advocacy training for your group:

- » *Baptist World Aid Australia*
www.baptistworldaid.org.au/get-involved/be-vocal/catalyst
- » *TEAR Australia*
www.tear.org.au
- » *CounterAct*
counteract.org.au/
- » *Pace e Bene*
www.paceebene.org.au/
- » *The Change Agency*
www.thechangeagency.org
- » ARRCC offers training on request, depending on capacity. Contact info@arrcc.org.au

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the enormity of climate change.

At one level it's true that each of us can only do a little, yet as communities and movements, we have the real possibility of standing up against the forces which would destroy much that sustains life on earth. The stakes are high. For Buddhists, complacency is not an ethical option. If, as Buddhists we live according to the Dharma then we have reason to be hopeful. The Dharma is the true nature of all things—we are inseparable from nature. It is inevitable that our good actions now will give good results in the future, however small. We follow the example of the Buddha and many inspirational teachers and disciples down the ages who persevered on the middle way of abandoning all greed and ill-will to follow and teach by their words and example, a path of simplicity, harmlessness and compassion for all living beings. We may feel we don't have much to offer but we see many examples of how one dedicated person can achieve great things. We have as models those believers who helped transform the societies of their own time: Martin Luther King, William Wilberforce, Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Aung San Suu Kyi and many others. They engaged with the moral issues of their own societies and brought to them the values of their faith. We may not make the same impact, but now we are challenged in our own time, in whatever ways we can, to do the same. And if you do feel overwhelmed, then try this little meditation from Bhante Sujato's Blog.

LET PEACE COME TO YOU

When you meditate, just relax.
Don't try to control your mind.
Don't try to stop it going here and there.
Just be peaceful.
Don't watch your breath. Just breathe.
Be at peace when your mind is still.
Be at peace when your mind is wandering.
Don't judge one state as better than the other. It is just how the mind is.
Let mindfulness settle down with the breath.
As you stop judging, stop trying, and stop controlling,
peace will come to you.
Welcome it.

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Ven. Aññā Samaneri



ARRCC Members:
Thea Ormerod, Carlyn Chen,
Jenni Downes, Miriam Pepper