



ISLAMIC 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 as part of Creation—in terms of how humanity relates to the natural world, how we relate to each other, and people of faith would also say how we relate to God.

Both the Qur'an and ecology tell us that human well-being and the natural world are interconnected. Human flourishing depends upon ecological flourishing, while environmental damage impacts on the health and welfare of humans. As people of faith, to acknowledge the spark of the divine in people and the natural world is to respect and care for both. This is why the issue of climate change is a deeply moral one. 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. Critically, it also includes children and future generations.

From this perspective we ask ourselves deep questions. From where do we derive fulfilment? What is the meaning in our lives? Does that meaning really come through actions that damage God's Creation and its peoples, and which alienate us from them? 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? In practice, how would concern for Creation be demonstrated in our lives? Is ensuring that our own lifestyles are not harmful to others the full extent of our ecological moral responsibility? Or are we called to a broader civic engagement, to promote policies that will serve the common good?

Caring for Creation as Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} (peace be upon him) did, is no longer widely practiced amongst Muslims. Despite the Qur'an and Sunnah both instructing Muslims to care for God's creation, the challenge remains for most Muslims to incorporate caring for the environment into their common life. This requires at least some people in the community to make it a priority to acquaint themselves with the religious basis for action and, to an extent, the science. It involves familiarising themselves with the large number of Qur'anic verses and *ahadith* (sayings) of Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} that urge human beings to protect Creation.

It may take a couple of years, but an ethic of caring for Creation should begin to be expressed in the various dimensions of community life in: prayers, aligning our lifestyles to more closely emulate Prophet Muhammad's^{pbuh} environmental lifestyle, the way properties are managed, the ecological awareness and lifestyles of community members, and 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 community become ecologically aware. In addition to the material in this kit and that available on our website, ARRCC can also provide direct support—please contact us at info@arrcc.org.au.

Yours in faith,



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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 faith community to go on a journey towards sustainability—towards the flourishing of all God’s creation—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 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! After all, Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} transformed a whole nation of people. Your sustainability group 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 community’s commitment to take action on climate change, so we can support you.

We suggest that you try to meet outside amongst God’s Creation (if the weather permits!), perhaps in a park or garden. This will help you get into the rhythm of connecting with Creation together and grow your awareness of being part of Creation—not just talking about it as a cerebral exercise! An important part of making working for sustainability ‘sustainable’ is growing your enjoyment and appreciation of your relationship with Creation and how it connects with your faith. 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 what motivated him/her to join the sustainability team and why he/she feels so strongly that God’s Creation needs to be protected and maintained. This will remind team members of the importance of your actions. Sharing your story with each other (and then eventually your mosque and wider community) is an important place to start.
- » Reflect on verses of the Qur’an and *hadith* (sayings and actions) of Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} that instruct Muslims to protect and care for all of God’s Creation.
- » Discuss how each of you would personally like to grow in your connection with and care for Creation. Which of the **Steps2Sustainability** do you feel most passionate about? Which do you want to learn more about?
- » Watch the following video of Dr Fazlun Khalid—a leading Islamic environmental scholar talking about climate change: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwlOpk_f8S0. Then discuss his message and how you can motivate other Muslims in the ummah (Muslim community) to prioritise climate change.
- » Watch the following four minute video about how influential Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} has been on history: www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKgJnQh-QRs—then inspire each other through discussing the impact Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} had on his community and continues to have on people around the world today. Focus on how he demonstrates that one person can make a difference.
- » Establish how often you want to meet. Perhaps you will meet to talk about plans for the **Steps2Sustainability**, or just to connect with Creation together, whether just for a walk, or to plant something together or take part in bush regeneration—or you may have other ideas.

You might like to explore the ideas on the following page at this or subsequent meetings.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: **START A TEAM**

Idea 1: Take the temperature of your faith community

- » How does your *ummah* currently connect with Creation? To what extent is your community distanced from the natural environment? Where do you think people stand on the issue of climate change and sustainability? Think of all the different demographic groups. Consider how these views are reflected in teaching, conversations, how the community operates, activities the community runs/is involved with, how funds are spent etc.
- » What are the barriers to your community becoming more sustainable? What are the information gaps for your community that your team could help fill?

Idea 2: Identify existing strengths in your faith community

- » Who in your community has knowledge or skills to contribute towards becoming more sustainable? In what ways are your community 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 community members already engaged with?
- » Brainstorm opportunities, small and large, on how you can engage your community in **Steps2Sustainability** and provide opportunities for them to connect with God's creation (or become more aware of how they already connect with Creation). 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 to in your community to get their support for doing **Steps2Sustainability** with your community? Meet with them and explain what you would like to do, then 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 community, perhaps you could start off with a small group, such as a youth group or Qur'an reading class.

RESOURCES

- » *Articles on connecting with Creation:*
www.arrcc.org.au/are_we_all_too_tired_to_care
www.smh.com.au/opinion/children-must-experience-nature-in-order-to-learn-its-worth-saving-20121121-29qbp.html
- » *You might find the following resource useful for your group to learn how to share your story and talk to others about climate change as these Christians have (references to Christian scriptures can be replaced with Islamic references when using this guide with your group).*
TEAR Australia's guide to sharing your story with others:
www.tear.org.au/static/files/resources/advocacyInfo-NarrativeWorkshop.pdf
- » *Creative thinking and brainstorming tools*
www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_CT.htm

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 the **Steps2Sustainability**). Or some earlier steps might not be suitable for your faith community (for example, your faith 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 work out what is appropriate for your faith community and the surrounding community.

STEP 1: ENGAGE YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY

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

To God belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. (Qur'an, Al-Nisa, 4:126)

Behold your Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent/steward (caliph) on earth'. (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah, 2:30)

The world is beautiful and verdant and God has appointed you as His stewards over it. He sees how you acquit yourselves. (Muslim)

Truly We did offer the trust to the heavens and earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it. But the man bore it. (Qur'an, Al-Ahzab, 33:72) (Tr. Ali)

God tells us in these verses that human beings were given a trust, to be a vicegerent and steward of the earth. As stewards of the earth human beings must maintain and protect all species—human beings, plants and animals—which all belong to God. Knowing these verses and their implications for our role of *caliph* (steward) can assist in engaging others in the community.

There are many angles from which to approach engaging your community. 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 people of faith. 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 made the least contribution to climate change, but suffer the most? How does the Qur'anic theme of justice apply here? Some of this is also covered in the *Tools for Learning* section.

As Muslims we also need to re-discover what the Qur'an and Sunnah (sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh}) have to say about God's Creation—how we are to relate to it, how we enact our role of *caliph* and how we reflect on God's Names and Attributes through the signs in Creation. The *Tools for Reflection* section provides some resources for connecting it all with our faith.

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

To start with, here are a few ideas you might like to use along the way to help people get back to the recognition of our role as *caliph*, 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 context for our relationship with God

The seven heavens and the earth and all things therein, declare His glory: there is not a thing but celebrates His praise; and yet you understand not how they declare His glory! (Qur'an, Al-Isra', 17:44)

See thou not that to God bow down in worship all things that are in the heavens and on earth, the sun, the moon, the stars; the hills, the trees, the animals; and a great number among Mankind. (Qur'an, Al-Hajj 22:18)

And the herbs and the trees—both (alike) bow in adoration. (Qur'an, Al-Rahman, 55:6)

Just like you did with your sustainability team, start helping your faith community connect with Creation.

Environmental protection is a means of developing our relationship with God. Every part of the universe has a unique role to play in glorifying God. Every species displays God's Names and Attributes, which helps human beings understand God, become closer to Him and increase our love for Him through understanding His Wisdom and Power. Walking in nature, seeing the trees, the wind, the birds, the waves of water and the beauty of sunrise allows this reflection on God and reflection on the role of human beings in the universe.

STEP 1: **ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY**

Here is one activity you could try:

- » Hold a congregational prayer outdoors and give people ways to interact with Creation as part of their worship. You could read verses of the Qur'an that talk about creation, the perfect balance created in the universe by God and how humans are instructed to be *caliph* of the earth. Or you could create reflection stations where people can read environmental verses from the Qur'an and *ahadith* while interacting with Creation. For example, read out the following verses of the Qur'an 22:18, 4:126, 24:41, 55:7-9, 54:49, then have people walk around the grounds of your mosque and the surrounding streets, observing the signs of God in Creation and reflect on the Names and Attributes evident from the natural environment. This will create an admiration for God's creation and develop a closer relationship to God, to inspire others to enact our role of *caliph*.

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

And the sky has He raised high, and has devised (for all things) a balance, so that you might never transgress the balance: weigh, therefore (your deeds) with equity, and do not upset the balance. (Qur'an, Al-Rahman, 55:7-9)

Corruption has appeared on the land and in the sea because of what the hands of humans have wrought. This is in order that we give them a taste of the consequences of their misdeeds that perhaps they will turn to the path of right guidance. (Qur'an, 30:41)

Human-induced climate change is a symptom of upsetting the balance and measure created by God. It is the result of the way humans have used and exploited the earth. We need to be willing to see the reality of this, to 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 Creation, which belongs to God.

As Muslims, we know that we are accountable for our every action, including our treatment of other species. Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} said: "In everything that lives there is a reward" (Bukhari). There are a number of ways you can inform your community, through *khutbahs* (sermons) from your *imam* or *sheikh*, through local newspapers/newsletters and through visiting groups in your community.

Here are some activities you could try:

- » Encourage your *imam* to preach about climate change in the Friday sermon and to include Qur'anic verses and *ahadith* about protecting God's Creation through our role as *caliph*.
- » Encourage Muslims to offer prayers about Creation and climate change in collective and individual prayers.
- » "Discuss various Qur'anic verses and *ahadith*, such as "Fear God in your treatment of animals" (Abu Dawud) and consider whether this means that human beings will be held accountable for destroying the homes of animals through our actions.
- » Consider the *hadith*, "There is none amongst the believers who plants a tree, or sows a seed, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats thereof, but it is regarded as having given a charitable gift (for which there is great recompense)" (Bukhari).
- » 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.
- » 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

A true believer does not hurt anyone with his thoughts, words or actions. (Bukhari)

And you devour the inheritance (of others) with devouring greed. (Qur'an, Al-Fajr, 89:19)

If any one deprives an heir of his inheritance, Allah will deprive him of his inheritance in Paradise on the Day of Resurrection. (Ibn Majah)

As you educate your faith community about climate change, help people keep in their consciousness that it is the world's poorest and most vulnerable people who are impacted the most.

Our actions are impacting poorer environments, especially low lying island countries, where sea walls are built to stop rising sea levels. Our actions are not only impacting on current generations, but are depriving future generations of benefitting from and enjoying God's Creation.

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 their 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's attention together and share a story about people in developing countries who are displaced because of climate change (see below for stories). Then ask people to reflect on the above *hadith* and verse of the Qur'an. 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. You might like to lead people in a collective *du'a* (prayer) for poor communities affected by climate change, or simply allow people to pray silently
- » 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 faith community to envision a new way forward

Truly, God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. (Quran 13:11)

It's important to not just be informing your community about how Creation has been broken, but to have a vision together of the renewal of Creation, and how we can be a part of this. Your faith community 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, and to 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 what your community would look like if it was more sustainable. Ask them to include themselves in the picture, showing the role they might take in this vision. Spend time sharing your pictures and visions with each other; perhaps stick them up on the walls so that people can be inspired by each other's visions. 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!

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 on climate change from leaders, prayer resources, sample sermons and group/personal guided study series.
- » *Muslim GreenWorship Resource from GreenFaith:*
greenfaith.org/resource-center/spirit/greenworship-resource/muslim-greenworship-resource
- » *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 MOSQUE OR MUSALLAH'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 faith community talks and acts about climate change when you are together can have a powerful effect, both on the wider community and 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 faith community to connect with and care for Creation.

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 is one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore climate change. Changing the source of your faith 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. You can also consider installing solar panels on your buildings—the rooftops of our buildings are a vast untapped potential for capturing energy from the sun. In addition, you can switch to solar (or solar-assisted) hot water, if you have buildings that have a significant need for hot water.

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 place of worship. 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 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” worship service: At the beginning of the worship 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 powerpoints (except for the fridge if there is one!), and 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, and what might be reasons behind any resistance 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 mosque can reduce its energy use or change to renewable energy generation. Light a candle (or invite people to light individual candles) and read or hand out Qur’anic verses about Creation belonging to God (4:126), human beings’ role as *caliph* (2:30), all of Creation praising and worshipping God (24:41), the Earth being created in perfect balance (54:49 and 55:7–9) and that the earth has been assigned to all living creatures (55:10).

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

RESOURCES

- » GreenFaith: Interfaith Partners for the Environment:
greenfaith.org/resource-center/spirit/greenworship-resource/muslim-greenworship-resource
- » ARRC's Repower Worship guide
www.arrcc.org.au/repower-worship
- » *Uniting Church Victas Synod's Energy Audit Handbook*
(a resource for churches but which is also useful for mosques/musallahs)
www.greenchurch.victas.uca.org.au/what-are-churches-doing/resources
- » 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

STEP 2: **REDUCE YOUR IMPACTS**

Idea 2: Transport

For every step of yours (that you take towards the mosque) there is a reward (while coming for prayer). (Bukhari)

We all have to get around—but often we assume that the fastest option is best, without considering the impact on our environment, with CO₂ from transport being one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. Whether it's our daily transport or how we choose to go on holidays, we need to think differently about how we get around. We need to start factoring in not only the impact on the environment, but perhaps our bodies and minds would benefit too by slowing down. We can help our faith communities become more conscious about transport by starting with thinking about how we all travel to our place of worship, and if there are other alternatives to consider that are not only better for the environment, but also help draw our community together. ARRCC's annual Walk or Ride to Worship event is one way that you can encourage your faith community to get around differently, but your community might come up with other ideas too.

Here is a suggested activity to get your faith 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 community meets with a large red dot.
- » Get people to draw their journey from home to their mosque or *musallah*, 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 mosque and elsewhere 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?
- » How can you take these ideas and apply them to travel in your everyday lives?

RESOURCES:

- » *ARRCC's Walk or Ride to Worship*
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

The worldly comforts are not for me. I am like a traveller, who takes a rest under a tree in the shade and then goes on his way. (Tirmidhi)

Richness does not lie in the abundance of goods but richness is the richness of the soul (heart, self). (Ibn Majah)

But waste not by excess, for God loves not the wasteful. (Qur'an, Al-An'am 6:141)

Do not waste water, even if you perform your ablution on the banks of an abundantly-flowing river. (Ibn Majah)

Our society is addicted to consumer goods. 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 accepted and that there is no such thing as enough. We are told that cheaper is better, even if it exploits workers in its production processes and products are quickly disposable, contributing to landfill. Not only does it consume vast amounts of fossil fuels to produce these goods, but the 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 comprises 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 communities expose marketing lies for what they are, and instead model a life-giving alternative?

The food we choose to eat also has an impact on climate change—meat production has a much larger environmental impact than vegetables and grains, and the distance that our food travels to get to our tables is something we need to be conscious of as well. We can encourage our community to think about LOAF (Local, Organic, Animal-friendly, Fairly traded) principles when considering their food. How can we also be more aware of the waste we create and reduce it—or in the case of compostable waste, even return it to the Earth as nourishment?

This lifestyle of consumption goes against Islamic teachings in the Qur'an and the life of Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh}, who lived a lifestyle with minimal resources. As seen from the above verses, the Qur'an prohibits waste. Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} said that it is wasteful even to use excess water from a flowing river to perform obligatory spiritual cleansing. This demonstrates the importance of not wasting in Islam, since a flowing river contains a large amount of water, yet wasting is still not permitted. Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh}, mended his clothes, repaired his shoes and as cited above avoided worldly comforts. As our role model Muslims should follow his example by using less resources, which will protect God's Creation and reduce the impacts of climate change.

Furthermore, reducing consumption enhances our relationship with God, through greater appreciation of the blessings we have been given and freeing us from being slaves to consumer society. Excess and waste lead to ingratitude, while consideration of the value of each good provides appreciation and connection with the Creator who allowed us the pleasure of the good.

Thinking about consumption doesn't just stop with reducing what we use and how we use it—it's also about thinking about the equal 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? Poverty remains an issue in Australia. However, for most Australians the possibilities for cutting down our consumption and becoming aware of how we consume are endless, and we can be creative in the way we do this.

With your team, discuss:

- » What do the scriptures say about consumption, and how can you get your community talking about what is "enough" and how our consumption impacts the planet as well as our spirituality?
- » What are all the resources that your mosque or *musallah* "consumes" together? Think about the quantity, quality, where it is sourced, and how the environmental impact of these could be reduced.
- » What sort of waste does your faith community produce and do you know how much there is of it and where it goes? How can you make your faith community aware of this?
- » What does your faith community do with your waste? Are all possible recycling options in place?

STEP 2: **REDUCE YOUR IMPACTS**

Here are a few ideas to consider:

- » If your community shares meals together, brainstorm how these meals can be sustainably sourced—with local produce, vegetarian, with minimum packaging and no disposable goods and processing and thinking 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?
- » Brainstorm ways your Ramadan *iftars* (meal of breaking fasts) can reduce consumption waste and energy use. Calculate how many disposable cups, plates and cutlery will be saved from washing items after use and the impact of purchasing locally sustainable food items.
- » Could you set up a worm farm or compost at your mosque or *musallah*?
- » Does your community print a lot of paper? What are other options to using disposable papers?
- » Could you host a creative event that helps people think differently about consumption—and recycling 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 COMMUNITY'S IMPACTS AT HOME

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

People can feel very private about their daily habits, or harbour 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 to go further in the journey.

Just as you got your mosque or *musallah* 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 what their individual impact is 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 mosque or *musallah* share ideas and celebrate positive steps forward.

Here is one idea you could try at your mosque/musallah:

- » 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/blue tacks 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 Friday prayer, like an offering. 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.

Here are some suggestions for how congregation 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.
- » Establish a community garden where community members can grow food communally, perhaps at a community site such as a mosque or community centre or in someone's yard that community members can access.
- » Encourage people to conduct 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 shower heads, setting up a compost or a worm farm) or have a small team 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 local mosque or someone in your community could host a local collection hub.
- » Encourage people to live more simply and consume less to be 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 LOCAL MOSQUE

Now that your faith 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. Islam promotes community engagement and places high importance on the community. This is demonstrated by prayers prayed collectively, breaking fast together, the importance of sharing meals and many other communal activities in Islam. Individuals are encouraged not to be isolated, but to be actively contributing to society and working alongside others to bring change.

Your 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. This could include engaging other communities in your area, talking to the schools, community centres and even the local council. Let others in your area know what you have done and inspire them to do likewise. 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, or you might also find that there are many in your community who rarely think about issues of sustainability but are open to learning and being transformed.

With your sustainability team, discuss:

- » What are ideas that you have implemented with your community that you could broaden to invite the wider community to be involved with too?
- » What connections does your *ummah* 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?
- » Where are the places in the wider community where people gather? (Mosques, community centres, other communities, community activities, local markets or festivals etc) Which of these might be interested in co-hosting an event or initiative with you in the community about these issues? What other faith groups are nearby and how can your congregation learn from their perspectives on caring for Creation or the ideas they are trying?
- » How could you get your congregation to think about their wider circles of influence as well—perhaps their workplaces, places of study, other groups they are connected to as well?

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

- » Host a local interfaith discussion about Caring for Creation, or a discussion forum about climate change with a guest speaker and space for people to share what they are already doing.
- » Talk to others in the street where your mosque/*musallah* is located to start an initiative such as a Sustainability Street or a local Permaculture group that offers to help homes in the neighbourhood start edible gardens. Or you could organise a clothes swap, tool library, upcycling workshop, Clean Up Australia Day or similar event to invite the wider community to.
- » Hold a Plant a Tree campaign, following in the example of Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh}, who regularly organised the planting of trees/date groves, and established sanctuaries and placed restrictions on areas where hunting was forbidden and where any tree that was cut down had to be replaced.
- » Make your own YouTube video to share the journey of your community so far.

RESOURCES

- » Host a community forum: www.aclunc.org/action/activist_toolkit/hosting_a_community_forum.shtml
- » Reduce your footprint: www.reduceyourfootprint.com.au/
- » Collaborative consumption: chrisriedy.me/2012/09/25/collaborative-consumption-in-australia/
- » See the **Tools for Advocacy** section for more on how to speak out to the wider community.

STEP 5: ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

Whoever of you sees an evil must then change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his heart. And that is the slightest [effect of] faith. (Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} narrated by Abu Saeed al-Khudri in Muslim)

Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change their inner selves. (Qur'an: 13:11)

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, then as you gain confidence, learn how to effectively write letters to MPs, visit your MP 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 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 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, so 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 discuss the structures that your faith community is a part of that relate to these policies. You could include:

- » **Your own mosque/musallah and broader religious structures:** Are there existing policies encouraging communities to be more sustainable and consider their environmental impact? Is your religious structure 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 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 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 community about where Australia currently stands in its policy positions on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and about 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 as an act of worship (perhaps an offering) during a service or afterwards. You could provide a template and encourage people to add their own personal note about why they care and what they are doing in their own lives to become 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 and ARRCC's policy positions. Then find out where your MP stands and see how you can work together.
- » Host a discussion forum inviting a local councillor, 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 community has been doing to show your 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

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

STEP 6: DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

- » Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia
- » 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* are about an ongoing, lifelong journey for your faith 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 by the most vulnerable across the globe. We hope that it will become the natural way of life for your faith 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 God 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 FAITH 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.



TOOLS FOR LEARNING

- » 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
- » United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
www.unfccc.int
- » United Nations climate change portal
www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change-2/

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

ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE: THE MORALITY

Climate change is not just a scientific issue—it is also a moral one. Scientists may be examining how human activity is changing the earth's climate and ecosystems. However, harm to God's Creation (both human and non-human), who or what benefits from such harm, and our part in the causes and solutions are deeply moral 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.

ARRCC believes that climate change is a moral issue for the following three reasons:

1. While the potentially detrimental outcomes of climate change most severely impact the poor, it is the prosperous who most significantly contribute to the cause through a more significant carbon footprint.
2. Outcomes that arise from choices in the present reduce choices for future generations.
3. How human beings relate to the rest of the created order bears testimony to the inner integrity of humanity itself.

Impacts on people

The melting of polar ice means that low-lying land such as atolls in the Pacific (e.g. Kiribati, Tuvalu) and delta areas (e.g. in Bangladesh) are being inundated by rising sea levels, causing coastal erosion and salination of fresh water supplies and increased soil salinity leading to failure of crops.

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. 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. Also associated with warming is increased spread in tropical diseases into communities that have previously had no exposure to the disease and therefore no immunity. Malaria particularly is an example of this.

Other social problems 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 have been the cause of the climate change challenges 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 for the global community, and especially developed countries, to 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. Taking action for climate change can have immediate impacts, as well as longer term impacts on poor communities.

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 UNMAH
REFLECT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND CREATION
AND THE CONNECTION TO THEIR FAITH,
INCLUDING STATEMENTS BY FAITH LEADERS,
PRAYERS AND SERMONS



YOUR RELIGION: STATEMENTS BY FAITH LEADERS

An Australian statement

- » **Common Belief—Australia's Communities on Climate Change**
d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/arrcc/pages/61/attachments/original/1443343972/Common_Belief.pdf?1443343972

'Common Belief' is a compendium of statements by religious organisations and leaders, put together by The Climate Institute: "It was our hope that Australia's communities could aid the broader dialogue on climate change by speaking the language of morality and of faith itself. Australia's religions responded enthusiastically. Here, for believers by believers, is the beginning of a dialogue on the morality of climate change.

The following is an excerpt from the statement by the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils:

- » **Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, speaking for Muslims**
Climate Change: Green is the Colour of Islam (p.30–31)

Many verses of Qur'an prescribe a way of life which expects human beings to conserve and enrich the environment. The environment is God's creation. The creation of earth and all its natural resources is a sign of His wisdom, mercy and power for the benefit of humans. It is God's best creation, and serves to develop human awareness and understanding of the creator.

God entrusts humans to enjoy the bounty of nature on the strict condition that they take care of it and preserve it. The colour of Islam is green, signifying the importance of nature.

The conditions Islam imposes on the use of the gift of nature are:

- strict restrictions on the use of life-supporting water
- eating and drinking modestly
- compulsory fasting to teach the followers of Islam to value of food and drink they enjoy
- austerity in all aspects of life, so that wastefulness and extravagance are great sins.

Our economic and social systems are totally at odds with the teachings of Islam. The economy is based on perpetual growth, which means ever-increasing production and consumption of goods and services. The protagonists of the free market system promote growth without considering its impact on nature.

An international statement

- » **An Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change**
www.arrcc.org.au/islamic_declaration

An Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change was issued in 2015, in the lead-up to the COP21 climate negotiations in Paris. It was drafted by academics and finalized at the International Islamic Climate Change Symposium held in Istanbul Aug. 17–18.

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate

... The pace of Global climate change today is of a different order of magnitude from the gradual changes that previously occurred throughout the most recent era, the Cenozoic. Moreover, it is human-induced: we have now become a force dominating nature. The epoch in which we live has increasingly been described in geological terms as the Anthropocene, or "Age of Humans". Our species, though selected to be a caretaker or steward (khalifah) on the earth, has been the cause of such corruption and devastation on it that we are in danger ending life as we know it on our planet. This current rate of climate change cannot be sustained, and the earth's fine equilibrium (mizān) may soon be lost. As we humans are woven into the fabric of the natural world, its gifts are for us to savour. But the same fossil fuels that helped us achieve most of the prosperity we see today are the main cause of climate change. Excessive pollution from fossil fuels threatens to destroy the gifts bestowed on us by God, whom we know as Allah—gifts such as a functioning climate, healthy air to breathe, regular seasons, and living oceans. But our



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attitude to these gifts has been short-sighted, and we have abused them. What will future generations say of us, who leave them a degraded planet as our legacy? How will we face our Lord and Creator? ...

3.2 We particularly call on the well-off nations and oil-producing states to:

- *lead the way in phasing out their greenhouse gas emissions as early as possible and no later than the middle of the century;*
- *provide generous financial and technical support to the less well-off to achieve a phase-out of greenhouse gases as early as possible;*
- *recognize the moral obligation to reduce consumption so that the poor may benefit from what is left of the earth's non-renewable resources;*
- *stay within the '2 degree' limit, or, preferably, within the '1.5 degree' limit, bearing in mind that two-thirds of the earth's proven fossil fuel reserves remain in the ground;*
- *re-focus their concerns from unethical profit from the environment, to that of preserving it and elevating the condition of the world's poor; and*
- *invest in the creation of a green economy.*

3.3 We call on the people of all nations and their leaders to:

- *aim to phase out greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible in order to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere;*
- *commit themselves to 100% renewable energy and/or a zero emissions strategy as early as possible, to mitigate the environmental impact of their activities;*
- *invest in decentralized renewable energy, which is the best way to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development;*
- *realize that to chase after unlimited economic growth in a planet that is finite and already overloaded is not viable. Growth must be pursued wisely and in moderation; placing a priority on increasing the resilience of all, and especially the most vulnerable, to the climate change impacts already underway and expected to continue for many years to come;*
- *set in motion a fresh model of wellbeing, based on an alternative to the current financial model which depletes resources, degrades the environment, and deepens inequality; and*
- *prioritise adaptation efforts with appropriate support to the vulnerable countries with the least capacity to adapt. And to vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples, women and children. ...*

» For more Islamic statements see:

fore.yale.edu/climate-change/statements-from-world-religions/islam/

YOUR RELIGION: PRAYERS/DU'A

God says in the Qur'an that He will respond to our prayers and that du'a is an essential component of Islam. In fact, He says that those who do not invoke Him will enter Hell in humiliation. Du'a is a way we become closer to God, acknowledging that He alone can give us our wishes, as well as recognising our shortcomings. Through prayer we can also recommit ourselves to the original task we were given of caring for Creation and remember the poor who are most affected by climate change.

And your Lord has said: Invoke Me: I will respond to your invocation. Verily those who scorn My worship (ie do not invoke Me) they will surely enter Hell in humiliation! (Qur'an, Ghafir, 40:60)

Or who is there that responds to the call (du'a) of the one in distress (besides God)? (Qur'an, 27:73)

There is no Muslim on the face of the earth that asks Allah for anything except that Allah gives it to him, or averts from him a similar evil, as long as he does not ask for something evil or for breaking the ties of kinship. (Tirmidhi)

Verily your Lord is the One modest and Generous, and when His servant raises his hands to Him in supplication, He is diffident (in some wordings, shy or hesitant) from returning them empty. (Ahmad, Abu Dawud and at-Tirmidhi)

There is nothing more noble in the sight of Allah than du'a. (Tirmidhi)





TOOLS FOR REFLECTION

Below is one *du'a* that you might find helpful to use with your community or you may like to write your own.

*This du'a was inspired and adapted from a prayer taken from **The Sanctuary Centre***

www.thesanctuarycentre.org/resources/written-prayers-prayers-in-response-to-climate-change.pdf

"Oh Allah—You are the Creator, the All-Powerful, the Sustainer of all life.

Forgive us for being careless with Your earth that you created in perfect measure and balance. Forgive us for not recognising the wisdom in the Creation of every species. Forgive us for taking and using your Creation to satisfy our selfish desires, rather than our needs.

Forgive us for being indifferent to the consequences of our treatment of Your Creation.

Forgive our greed and carelessness, which has altered the perfect measure and balance You Created and has caused many of our Brothers and Sisters in humanity to suffer.

Please forgive us Ya-Ghaffar (O All-Forgiving One).

Thank you for allowing us to recognise our shortcomings, our mistakes and our purpose in life. Thank you for inspiring the light of belief in our hearts. Thank you for showing us the right path and inspiring us to take a step closer to You by loving Your Creation and wanting to look after it.

Oh Allah change us now into what you will be pleased with. Inspire us to love and care for every part of Your Creation. Allow us to change our habits to care for every species. Allow us to encourage others to care for your Creation. Allow us to recognise that caring for Your Creation is obeying Your Commands and following the actions of Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh}.

Allow us to implement the commandments in Your Qur'an, not to waste and not to alter Your balance. Allow us to take seriously the role You have given us to be Your caliph. Allow us to recognise the perfection in all You have Created. Allow us to implement the practices of Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} by caring for all species, planting trees, valuing each resource and being grateful for the use of any of Your Creation for our needs.

Oh Allah, protect the people living with the affects of climate change now and give them strength. Give patience and strength to those facing rising temperatures, drought, water shortages, unpredictable weather, failed crops, flooding, land loss and salination of vital water supplies.

Oh Allah allow all people everywhere to recognise the importance of protecting and maintaining Your Creation. Allow our politicians and leaders to act in the best interests of all nations today, and all people in the future, in order to avoid catastrophic changes.

Oh Allah please allow a generation of leaders who will be willing to act justly so that those who have contributed so little to the problems we are facing, and have fewer resources with which to face it, are not left to shoulder our burden.

Oh Allah, fill the hearts of those who lead rich nations—give them your mercy and compassion on poor countries already suffering the effects of a changing climate. Just as they have been moved to cancel debt in the past, encourage them also to release funds so that poor communities can adapt to the effects of climate change, and develop cleanly.

Oh Allah, Help us to tread lightly and use wisely,
Valuing the needs of others, and of Creation, above our own desires.
Challenge us where we need to change our lifestyles,
Convict us when we need to speak out on behalf of a voiceless people, or world
And soften us where we have stood in judgement of others.

Oh Allah, change us and use us in ways you are pleased with,
For the restoration of your world, and the protection of all your children.

Amin

» **22nd Century Mans Lament** *(Unpublished poem by Abu Zahraa)*

1. Oh how I wish,
I was like the bees.
For they are better,
Muslims than me.
Buzzing about,
from flower to flower.
Tirelessly working, to sustain
the life of another.
But it's not the life for me,
though I do love their nectar
Pity they'll never benefit,
From the rotten fruits of my labour.

2. I wish I had,
the resoluteness of the mountains.
For they are stronger Muslims,
than me
Faithfully firm and fixed
upon His will.
Digging deep into the earth,
keeping it stable and still.
But I am man, weak and wavering,
soon over the hill.
Oh how will you recover?
Once I've had my fill.

3. I wish I was like the ants,
yes even those littlies.
Far better Muslims,
than I'll ever be.
Defending their own, building Eco
homes,
a model of a caring community.
Marching orderly one by one
together in harmony.
But I'm here for a good time, not long
and my consumer lust.
Will only be satiated,
when I've eaten the dust.

4. If only I had the humility,
of the winds and the breeze.
Those unseen wonders,
better Muslims than me.
Pushing the clouds,
where life's needed most.
Anonymously for His sake,
not to boast
While I build higher and higher,
monuments to my ego.
My trumpet is the only thing,
I care to blow.

5. Sometimes I wonder if I belong.
I wonder if human beings are
indigene.
To this earth where you all get along,
it feels like we don't fit in.
I wonder what you would all think.
If humans were to suddenly leave.
I wonder would you miss us at all?
Or would you say with a sigh of relief?
"Now that they've gone,
there's much work to be done.
But maybe just maybe,
by His will and grace.
There's still time left for us,
to restore this place.

YOUR RELIGION: SERMONS/KHUTBAHS

The sermon/khutbah is an important means for inspiring believers to become actively engaged, by helping people understand what the Qur'an and Sunnah teach us about God's Creation, our relationship to it, and how this is interrelated with our connection to God.

14th April 2013 was Green Khutbah Day in North America, where imams delivered green khutbahs, urging their congregations to reduce their impact on the environment. Below is a sample of green khutbahs that your imam can use, or modify.

» **Islamic Religious Council of Singapore: Graciousness in Environmental Preservation**

Dear Friday Jemaah, Taqwa is our fortress which prevents us from committing sins, and helps us to steer clear from things that could lead to nuisance and destruction in this world and the hereafter. But taqwa is something that needs to be nurtured, and this is done by striving to heed Allah's commands and avoid what He has prohibited upon us. By developing this sense of taqwa, it gives rise to exemplary adab and ethics in our relationship with Allah and all His creations.

Dear brothers, Allah s.w.t. has made it easy for humankind to reap the benefits of the earth's natural resources, as well as enable humankind to gain control over Allah's creations such as animals and plants. These are blessings or nikmat from Allah to enable humankind in fulfilling their responsibility to radiate

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goodness on Allah's earth. Let us reflect upon verse 20, surah Luqman: *"Do you not see that Allah has made subject to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth and amply bestowed upon you His favors, [both] apparent and unapparent? But of the people is he who disputes about Allah without knowledge or guidance or an enlightening Book [from Him]."*

This provision, a gift from Allah, has helped developed civilisations and enabled humankind to build beautiful cities and travel around the earth to gain inspiration from the excellence of the Islamic civilisation. Even though there are many species of animals and plants, but it is humankind that controls them. As much as we are expected to use these resources wisely and for good purposes, we are also the ones who may destroy and harm nature. As Allah says in surah Ar-Rum verse 41: *"Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]."*

These verses in the Quran remind us that we are given the advantage of our intellect and wisdom to gain benefits from these creations, but it does not in any way allow us to misuse our gifts and take from nature arbitrarily. Instead, we are required to be responsibly and manage the resources Allah has made available to us. There may be those who are wondering, what is the relationship between faith (iman) and caring for nature? Why does one need to think about the natural resources and how will that enable him or her to gain Allah's pleasure and a place in heaven?

- » *Green Khutbah Campaign:*
www.khaleefa.com/green-khutbah-campaign/
- » *Muslim Buzz—A reflection on a green khutbah:*
muzlimbuzz.sg/khutbah-reflections-graciousness-in-environmental-preservation/

General theological resources:

- » *GreenFaith's Muslim GreenWorship Resource:*
www.greenfaith.org/resource-center/spirit/greenworship-resource/muslim-greenworship-resource
- » *Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES)'s*
www.ifees.org.uk/green-guide-for-muslims
- » *Interfaith worship resources:*
www.interfaithpowerandlight.org



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 mosque/*musallah* 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 Muslims, part of our Mission is to enact our role of *caliph* (steward) on Earth by protecting God's Creation. Allah commands Muslims to be active members of society and promises rewards for all good actions, regardless of the outcome. We are commanded in a *hadith* to plant a sapling even if it is the last hour. So let's get started, working to protect Allah's creation.

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 mosques or *musallahs*.
- » Hold a public forum on climate change, with guest speakers, including your local MP.
- » Get your mosque or *musallah* involved with a community event.
- » Get your mosque or *musallah* involved in a faith-based network which is working on environmental issues, such as ARRCC, the Faith Ecology Network or the environmental network based at the Islamic Sciences and Research Academy.
- » Promote and champion a “climate change response” in the broader community.
- » You could include fundraising for projects assisting poor communities affected by climate change.

RESOURCES

- » *A wide range of excellent resources for community groups can be found on www.thechangeagency.org/*

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 mosque or *musallah* 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



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 Islamic 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
- » *Pacific Calling Partnership*
www.erc.org.au/pcp/
- » *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.

As Muslims we must recognise that the natural environment belongs to God, was created by God in perfect balance and measure and that human beings are only one species in a complex, balanced universe. Every species praises God and human beings were given the role of *caliph* (steward) by God to protect and maintain God's Creation.

The Qur'an and the example of Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} prohibit waste, promote responsible consumption of goods and promote reducing our impact on the earth in order to protect and maintain His species. Human beings have altered the balance of God's Creation, which has resulted in climate change.

With the Qur'an as our guide and Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} as our role model Muslims can and must reclaim our role as *caliph* enacting change to reduce the impacts of climate change on our planet. Even the smallest of actions can make a difference and will be rewarded by God.

If we follow the Prophet^{pbuh} who told us to plant a tree even if it is the last hour we realise the importance of every action we take in the sight of God. Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh} was only one man, yet he changed an entire community and his religion has spread across the entire globe. He truly demonstrated that one person can make a difference. So don't feel overwhelmed.

With Allah's support we can all make a difference.

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