



FEN Newsletter July 2021

Greetings from FEN, the Faith Ecology Network, an Australian hub for strengthening an interfaith dialogue between science and religion.

Editorial

As Australians in most states experience more disruption to life due to COVID-19 impacts, we share news with you of recent and upcoming events related to our focus on Biodiversity. As individuals, the threats to biodiversity can seem overwhelming. The events and items mentioned in this newsletter therefore, face the reality of what the problems are, give us valuable information and offer us diverse practical ways we can act across the faith and ecology networks in spite of COVID limitations.

Connecting with, supporting those who have taken on roles of addressing the problems, and growing communities of life are positive hopeful ways of living and acting. We learn to realise that as the universe unfolds, our understanding of the Divine evolves and deepens, and our faith development surely evolves as well. The FEN Resource: [Ten Ways Faith Groups Care for Biodiversity](#) is an excellent tool to use. We would love you to email us with how you have implemented any of the suggested activities. faithecology@gmail.com

Anne Lanyon, Faith Ecology Network Co-ordinator

RECENT EVENTS

BIODIVERSITY EMERGENCY:
Faiths Regenerating, Wonder, and the Will to Care

05 Jun 2021 **YouTube LIVE**
7pm [affinitydialogue](#)

Dr Susan Murphy Roshi
Respondent
Zen Teacher, Writer, Freelance Radio Producer and Film Director

Anne Lanyon
Respondent
Community Educator, Co-ordinator of the Faith Ecology Network (FEN), Board Member of Jubilee Australia Research Centre

Professor Lesley Hughes
Keynote Speaker
Professor of Biology and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Integrity & Development) at Macquarie University

Associate Professor Clive Pearson
Facilitator
Research Professor, Center for Public & Contextual Theology (PACT) Charles Sturt University

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY JUNE 5, 2021: Report on Biodiversity.

Faiths Regenerating Wonder and the Will to Care. *Australia's Life Support Systems are on Life Support* was how ecologist Professor Lesley Hughes titled her presentation at this World Environment Day webinar held by the Affinity Intercultural Foundation in collaboration with FEN.

In a brief 20 minute Powerpoint presentation, Professor Hughes gave audiences a punchy overview of a February 2021 report on **Ecosystem Collapse from the Tropics to Antarctica** in which she was one of 38 scientific authors. Read the full report, [Combating ecosystem collapse from the tropics to the Antarctic](#).

We need to be reminded how interconnected we humans are on all of Earth's ecosystems here in Australian and globally. We depend on these collapsing systems to survive. Please watch this webinar with your faith community on any of these platforms:

[Affinity YouTube](#). [Affinity Facebook](#). [Affinity Twitter](#)

FEN members, David Low, Anne Lanyon and Susan Murphy, and Clive Pearson and Ahmet Polat from Affinity added their faith voices to the dialogue. All highlighted the urgent need for people of all faith traditions and none to take action to care for the precious, unique ecosystems which have evolved over the eons in Australia. With grateful thanks to Ahmet Polat, the webinar was promoted to over 1500 people via social media and helped us achieve 1017 views with numbers continuing to increase.

The [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#) launched on World Environment Day. **TEN MORE YEARS TO RESTORE THE PLANET! “Preventing, halting and reversing the degradation of ecosystems worldwide”** is the global rallying cry to heal our planet. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems **on every continent and in every ocean**. It can help to end poverty, prevent a mass extinction and help halt climate change. **It will only succeed if everyone plays a part. What will you restore?**

[Dialogue Demonstrates Connections Across Faith and Science](#)

Nalini Nadkarni has loved trees. As a kid, she spent days climbing them, and she swore an oath to herself that as a grownup she would do what she could to protect them. Today, Nadkarni is a biology professor at the University of Utah who for 35 years has studied rainforest canopies and, true to her childhood promise, has done what she can to raise awareness about the values of trees and why their preservation matters to everyone.

"I chose to engage faith-based groups because nearly 85% of all humans self-identify as being religious, which is a much larger proportion than those who are scientists and conservationists," she said during an opening session at an online symposium on science, religion and ethics hosted by the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#), the world's largest general scientific society and the publisher of Science magazine.

The June 15 virtual gathering was held to mark the 25th anniversary of the association's [Dialogue on Science, Ethics, & Religion](#), a milestone reached in 2020. The program has sought to foster engagement among scientists and people of faith to not only show how science relates to people's lives but also to further science, and trust in it, in ways that benefit all people.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Community, Faith, and Nature - Voices from Oceania and Asia

An official side event at the [UNFCCC Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2021](#) July 6, 4pm AEST.

Ocean and forest communities, especially Indigenous Peoples in Oceania and Asia are at the forefront of the impact and action in response to the climate crisis. They are leading in the struggle for **nature-based solutions** and their voices need to be heard more. [Register here](#).

[View program](#)

[EARTHCARE Board Game](#) by Lisa Wriley



Help get this board game out into the community and being played!

Lisa says, *"I have a working prototype and am running a Kickstarter to raise the funds to print the first 500 copies of the board and box, make, and deliver the first 300 complete games to people who pledge support."* [The Game Kickstarter](#) ends midnight **Sunday July 11**.

As a child in the 1970's, FEN member, Lisa Wriley played and loved a NZ board game called CONSERVATION which taught her to value picking up litter, recycling resources and nature conservation. 45 years after it was created, she has permission to re-invent the game and has called it EARTHCARE. **It is a fun way to explore the many ways we can care for Earth, connect with nature and help conserve the planet's resources.** Australian made and suitable for 6-106 year olds, the game pieces are made of 70% recycled cardboard, clay, smooth upcycled glass and aluminium, recycled plastic and rescued fabric. 50% of profits will go to conservation projects.

[July 21 World Ranger Day](#)

Learn to appreciate Australian Indigenous Rangers who travelled to Kenya in 2017 with the Thin Green Line Foundation. ['Ranger to Ranger'](#) is a feature documentary on conservation and culture filmed in East Africa.

Plastic Free July

is a great opportunity to take the 5Rs challenge to limit your plastic use at home, your place of worship and at work using this system: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle plastic products. www.plasticfreejuly.org



Pledge to join the 5Rs club

"These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish."
- *Laudato Si* 22



1. Refuse

- To laminate notices at school, church or work
- Single-use plastic bags
- Styrofoam cups
- Individually-wrapped food products



2. Reduce

- Cling-wrap use: try air-tight containers
- Single-item plastic food containers
- Plastic fruit and vegetable packaging
- Single-use plastic household cleaning bottles: try refillable containers



3. Reuse

- Don't purchase more food containers! Take stock of what you already own
- Existing take-away and other food-safe containers for storing or freezing food
- Glass and strong plastic jars to store bulk-buy dry goods
- Smaller plastic and glass containers are great for storing home-made dressings
- Vinnies and other op-shops are fantastic for second-hand, food safe and hygienic Tupperware - and at a fraction of the cost of new



4. Repurpose

- Small gum containers as first-aid or sewing kits
- Water bottles as self-watering containers for pot plants
- Plastic bottles as pen holders, and pots for plants



5. Recycle

- Find out what is recyclable through household collections
- Choose soft-plastic recycling through RedCycle drop-off points
- Almost everything can be recycled! From reading glasses, to mobiles and IT equipment

plastic, the modern miracle that has made modern life possible. But this non-renewable resource is polluting our waterways, our food, our environment and our way of life. Take the *challenge* and go plastic free this July.

UPCOMING FEN PARTNER EVENTS

September 11-26, Victoria Nature Festival

Through **Nature For All**, a FEN partner, we are happy to promote this 2 week Festival of nature events organised by Parks Victoria. Hopefully COVID will allow you to attend events from Traditional Owners, Zoos Victoria, Parks Victoria, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Phillip Island Nature Parks and more, including:

- the world-famous Phillip Island Penguin Parade
- a nature walk with the Eastern barred Bandicoot
- a search for endangered hooded plovers
- a tour of the Budj Bim National Park.

Powerful Owl (*Ninox Strenua*),
endangered in Victoria.



H.H. the Dalai Lama will address the 2021 Parliament of World Religions as the Featured Luminary: October 17th - 18th, 2021

"I believe the interfaith movement can contribute in helping to save the world. But not just through the nice words of dialogue but with our actions. It is the responsibility of human beings to fix the problems which we create - of climate change, of the widening income gap, of hate and war. God will not do this for us, we must take responsibility for our actions. [Register here](#)

October 17,18: Global Multifaith Day of Action

[ARRCC](#) (Australia's Religious Response to Climate Change) along with others in the GreenFaith International network around the world will hold **Faiths 4 Climate Justice** two weeks before governments are expected to increase their climate commitments at the crucial UN climate talks in Glasgow. They invite your faith group to get involved.

[Earth Ethics Conference in November.](#)

Michelle Maloney, Director of FEN's partner, Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA), has invited FEN and our networks to be part of AELA's conference.

Parliament of World Religions Workshop Proposal

FEN member, Philippa Rowland, President of the Multifaith Association of South Australia, has submitted a proposal for a session at the 2021 Parliament of World Religions entitled: *Biodiversity Matters: Indigenous Wisdom, Integral Ecology, Compassion and Non-Violence*. We wish Philippa every blessing for the success of this submission.