

ABM Climate Change Position Statement – December 2018

The Anglican Board of Mission acknowledges that the earth's climate is changing rapidly. We acknowledge that this rapid change is at least partly caused by human activity and that this rapid change is having many negative impacts, particularly for the world's poor.

Many of the worst impacts of climate change are being felt in our region. The 2017 World Risk Report calculates two Pacific countries have the highest risk from natural disasters in the world: Vanuatu and Tonga. Five other countries in our region (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, the Philippines and the Solomon Islands) are also ranked in the top 15 for disaster risk. Many of the natural disasters in these seven countries and elsewhere are caused or exacerbated by climate change. In 2018 alone, ABM responded to numerous climate-induced disasters including Typhoon Mangkhut in the Philippines, Cyclone Gita in Tonga, and floods in Kenya.

Climate change impacts are being felt not just through high-profile disasters but also through slower change. Communities in some parts of the Pacific are impacted by steadily rising sea levels, seeping into coastal vegetable gardens and even into coastal houses. In countries such as Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, where ABM has partnerships stretching back more than a century, whole communities are already being evacuated due to rising sea levels. In other countries where ABM works, such as Kenya, Zambia and the Philippines, poor farmers are finding rainfall patterns less predictable. This means seeds and time spent planting can be wasted by rain arriving too late, with ensuing food insecurity.

Our local partners are, as faith-based organisations, already part of affected communities. They are the first responders when disaster strikes and they feel the pain. Our fifth mark of mission calls us to 'Protect, care for and renew life on our planet' and our third mark of mission calls us to 'Stand in solidarity with the poor and needy.'

In line with the Australian Anglican Church position on Climate Change, as affirmed in the Anglican General Synod in July 2014, we acknowledge with deep regret that it is future generations and other forms of life who will also bear the cost if we lack the will to limit climate change.

Scientific consensus, expressed through the publications of the UN-backed Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change, links these climate changes with the exponential rise in CO₂ emissions since the industrial revolution. We therefore affirm the Paris Agreement target to keep temperatures to no more than 1.5⁰C above pre-industrial levels and express the urgent need to adopt renewable energy sources and stop harmful emissions.

We affirm declarations made by Pacific faith communities, including the 2016 *Tokatoka Declaration of Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience* which calls for "national, regional and global climate change and disaster risk reduction policy frameworks", and demands that climate-induced migration and forced displacement of Pacific Island people is treated as "a human rights threat".

We recognise and strongly support the key role that Anglican communities and our local partners play in strengthening local resilience. We acknowledge our responsibilities under Sustainable Development Goal 13 to ensure such measures receive the necessary finance.

We acknowledge the Anglican Church of Australia's Protection of the Environment Canon 2007 and commit ABM to managing our own environmental impact, including our carbon emissions, and to helping to amplify the voices of those most affected by climate change. We encourage our audiences, particularly the Anglican Church and the broader Australian community, to examine their own environmental impact and to take positive action.

The primary responsibility lies with emitters of Greenhouse gases. ABM therefore urges greater action from fossil fuel users and our government in Australia, including action to strengthen climate finance commitments, support initiatives that build climate resilience and adaptation, and assist recovery from climate-induced disasters.

