

CRY OF THE EARTH CRY OF THE POOR Part 1

The Signs of the Times

The millennium drought, the 2019-2020 bushfire season, COVID 19 and the 2021 floods have raised questions for many Australians about our common home. As well the need to transition to a low carbon economy, we also know that the safety, health and livelihoods of those who are the poorest and most vulnerable are usually the most severely impacted.

Fires, floods, and droughts have become less predictable and more intense.

"Throughout my career in natural resource management, I have attended quite a few large fires, saved houses, and have even been stranded in front of a fire, but never had I felt such confusion as trying to resolve what seemed the sensible thing to do when my gut feeling was to stay and defend." (Neil Ward)



Families that have been farming for generations are rethinking operations whilst others are leaving the land.

The first thing that we've done much more successfully, in the past few years since the Millennium drought, is protect our soil resources by better management of livestock, using the water when it falls more efficiently and preserving it in pasture and in the landscape... I feel concerned about the future viability of farms. The way forward is not completely clear for everybody, is it?" Lucinda Corrigan –NSW farmer

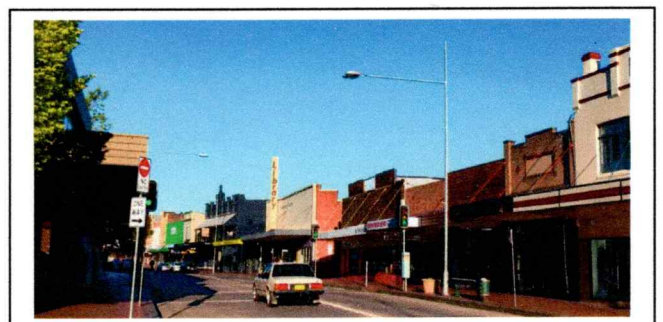
The way in which we have built our cities has resulted in urban heat islands Dr Sebastian Pfautsch

January 4th 2020, Penrith was the hottest place on Earth at 48.9°C (half-way to boiling point) and in 2019 Parramatta sweltered through 47 days with temperatures over 35°C."

Climate Council

The mining sector may only employ 2-3% of the Australian workforce, but it is a very important employer in some communities. These communities are anxious about the future, as a Lithgow resident explains:

"...the domino effect that the closure of this mine will have would be disastrous for the local community. Schools will be forced to lay off staff, shops will close, and people will move away... the town [is] hanging by a thread as it is."



Adapted from the 2021-22 Social Justice Statement
ACBC Cry of the Earth Cry of the Poor

CRY OF THE EARTH CRY OF THE POOR Part 2

More Signs of the Times

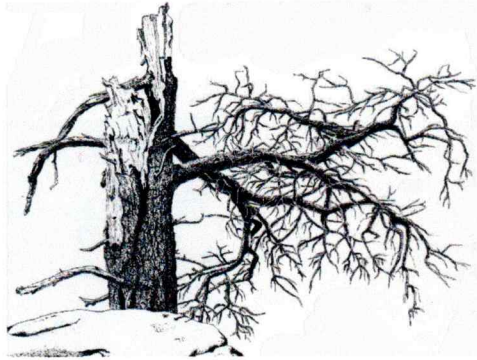
Listening to our Communities

Our interference with the balance of natural ecosystems has contributed to the outbreak and spread of animal diseases within the human population.

In Queensland the extensive destruction of east coast forests and unsustainable land clearing for new housing estates have

“resulted in bats.....coming into closer contact with horses. Infected horses appeared to have contracted the Hendra Virus from bat urine or faeces and were able to infect people.”

Assoc Prof K Barraclough (Doctors for Australia) and Exec Dir F Armstrong (Climate and Health Alliance)



For the First Nations People, the ecological crisis is particularly painful Vanessa Cavanagh's words reflect deep connection with country

“... for this grandmother tree, the combination of ongoing drought and persistent flames ended her reign at the far edge of the yard. The sight of this old tree with her crown removed brought warm, stinging tears to my eyes. It was a deep hurt of losing someone far older and wiser than me. Losing someone who was respected and adored.

Someone with knowledge I cannot fathom or comprehend. When I told my mum that evening, she reacted similarly, a personal and family loss.

To others she might just be a big tree.”

The Cry of the Young see their future being threatened. They want intergenerational justice

“I reckon (the community) should listen to us because at the end of the day it's our future, right?

They're going to be going and it's going to be up to us to continue.” --(Year eleven student)

Listening to our Neighbours

Rising sea levels, bigger king tides, more frequent and severe storms, coastal erosion, coral bleaching, and decreasing fish stocks are already a daily reality for Pacific island nations. Some islands are in imminent danger of disappearing beneath the waves.

“As a mother of a seven-month-old baby I am worried about his future and his life - all the children of Tuvalu have a right to life - a right to an environment with good quality. I love my country, I love my people and traditions, I love my culture and I don't want to lose them because of climate change. We all want to stay in our own lands because it defines who we are. We don't want to migrate or relocate. Merineta from Tuvalu

Marlene Moses, former Nauruan Ambassador to the United Nations, points out:

“For the people of small islands, understanding the importance of the ocean to human survival is as natural as breathing. If the ocean is healthy, we are healthy; if the future of the ocean is uncertain, so is ours.”

Listening to Creation

Every creature speaks to us of the Creator, but human beings do not always listen.

The First Nations people remind us of the interconnectedness of people and the rest of creation:

“The land and environment is our Mother. Treat her with love and tenderness, nurture and never mistreat her, or take more than what is required.”Vicki Clark

It is estimated that nearly three billion native animals were in the path of the 2019-2020 bushfires!

The suffering of our rivers and waterways, our groundwater, reefs, and oceans, is plain to see. Successive bleaching events in the Great Barrier Reef send a loud message.

