

UCA Assembly

Environmental Statements and Resolutions

Quick Summary (Chronological):

Document reference	Date	Name	Summary of main points
1.	1977	Statement to the Nation	“We are concerned with the basic human rights of future generations and will urge the wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth’s resources for their use and enjoyment.”
2.	1979, 1985, 1999, 2000	Uranium Mining and Nuclear Resolutions	The Uniting Church has a policy of a moratorium on uranium mining.
3.	1988	Statement to the Nation	We will work to promote the responsible management, use and occupation of the earth by human societies. We will seek to identify and challenge all structures and attitudes which perpetuate and compound the destruction of creation.
4.	1988	Statement on Nuclear Deterrence, Peace and Disarmament	Reconciliation includes the natural environment and therefore requires a special regard for the whole ecological system.
5.	July 1991	The Rights of Nature and the Rights of Future Generations	Resolved to call upon the churches to make room for God's covenant with creation within the realm of law by committing themselves at all levels to recognition of the "Rights of Future Generations" and "Rights of Nature". & appeal to the United Nations to develop a new Declaration which explicitly protects these rights. Simultaneously, we appeal to the individual nations to incorporate these rights into their constitutions and legislation.
6.	2000	May the Land Lie Fallow (Caring for the Earth)	Invite congregations to reflect on the Rights of Nature and Rights of Future Generations and consider how to enact this commitment within their local context.
7.	July 2003	Tuvalu and the Impact of Global Warming	Resolved: to call on the Australian Government to immediately sign and ratify the Kyoto Protocols in relation to global warming, and to offer the guarantee of special immigration status to the people of Tuvalu. To express our solidarity with the Christian Church of Tuvalu in this predicament and pray for the people and church of Tuvalu.

8.	2006	Global Warming and its Impact on Pacific Nations	Reaffirmation of call for the Australian Government to ratify the Kyoto Protocols. A call upon the people of the Uniting Church to adopt lifestyles which have a minimal impact on global warming.
9.	November 2006	For the Sake of the Planet and all its People: A Uniting Church in Australia Statement on Climate Change	Encourage all UC people and congregations to model low carbon ways of living and working, and to regularly include the environment and lifestyle change in prayer, worship and decision making, while also advocating for government policies moving away from fossil fuels to non-nuclear renewable energy sources and engaging in dialogues, shared learning and action with environmental action groups.
10.	July 2009	An Economy of Life: Re-imagining human progress for a flourishing world	Adopt this statement, examine our lives, act and advocate for new economic models and approaches so as to foster abundant life for all creation.
11.	2012	Reconciliation People: A Statement from the National Young Adult Leaders Conference of the UCA (2012)	“we are upset at the misuse of the natural environment for greed and consumerism and the lack of compassion towards those affected... we will act responsibly by advocating for investment in renewable energy and endeavouring to make responsible, ethical decisions in our day to day living.”
12.	July 2014	Investment in fossil fuels	Including: a) congratulate the Synods of NSW/ACT and Victoria and Tasmania on their work towards divestment from fossil fuels, b) commend this course of action to other Uniting Church entities as they make their investment decisions; c) commend the movement to divest from fossil fuels to our ecumenical partners.
13.	July 2018	For the Whole Creation	Acknowledge our commitment to climate change, and history of advocacy and practical action in this area. Work with First Peoples and church partners in this area. Encourage all parts of the church to inform themselves, advocate for action, listen to the vulnerable, reduce our emissions and tell stories of best practice.
14.	July 2019	Statement from the President’s Conference, Fiji 2019	We commit to working with First Peoples, sisters and brothers in the Pacific and other communities of faith on climate change; being compassionate; being thankful; being responsible; raising our voices in advocacy and being a green church.

Full resolutions can be viewed at <http://www.unitingjustice.org.au/environment/uca-statements>

Discussion questions:

- How is your congregation supporting the UCA's divestment?
- Has your congregation and its members examined their lives in order to identify where and when they behave in ways that deny human and ecological wholeness?
- Has your congregation and its members examined their lives in order to identify where and when monetary interests are placed ahead of human and ecological wellbeing?
- How is your congregation contributing to identifying, developing and implementing alternative systems, structures and processes within the church that promote the practice of the economy of God and model a way of being in the world which promotes human wholeness, equity and ecological sustainability?
- How is your congregation challenging rampant consumerism and materialism as antithetical to what is necessary for a healthy and sustainable world and engaging in public conversation about notions of sufficiency, abundance and the fullness of life?
- How is your congregation advocating for social and economic policies which dramatically and urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption and support the research, development and implementation of clean and renewable energy?
- How is your congregation calling on Australian governments to develop economic systems and structures which recognise that human and ecological flourishing require much more than the creation of wealth by ensuring that public policy seeks to address first and foremost the wellbeing of all people, especially those most vulnerable, and the environment?
- How is your congregation calling on the Australian Government to work with other national governments and multilateral institutions to redevelop a global economic system that is regulated, transparent and accountable, for the wellbeing of people and the planet?
- How is your congregation expressing solidarity with Pacific nations such as Tuvalu, praying for their people and advocating for them to be granted special immigration status in the face of climate change and its impacts?
- How is your congregation advocating for the Australian government to commit to significant action on climate change?
- How is your congregation reflecting and promoting the Rights of Future Generations and the Rights of Nature?

UCA Assembly Environmental Statements and Resolutions in more detail: Newest to Oldest

(#14) For the Whole Creation Statement

A statement from the President's Conference, Fiji 2019

“For God so loved the cosmos” (John 3:16)

The good news of Christ is for the whole of creation
and we are one with all creation in Christ. (Col 1: 23)

We, the participants of the 2019 President's Conference, gathering in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Fiji have drawn together to bear witness and to draw courage from each other – here where climate change is most clearly seen, most clearly felt, by the people least responsible for its progress.

We acknowledge:

Our connection to Moana, Waitui, Wansolwara people, whose lands and hearts are bound by deep, blue Pacific waters.

We are part of the Pacific, a liquid continent where islands are connected and sustained by the ocean currents.

The need to listen again to the voices of our sisters and brothers, our friends, fellow members of the Body of Christ, the most vulnerable and most impacted, who also demonstrate great resilience, determination, hopefulness and commitment to work for change.

This has inspired us and challenged us to hear God's call to costly discipleship and we lament the effects of the human sin of greed and particularly its effects on this planet, our home.

Together we affirm:

The Uniting Church's commitment to the wellbeing of the environment arises out of our belief that God is the Creator of the world in which we live and move and have our being.

This 'groaning creation' is God's 'good' creation.

Through our discerning of Scripture, we acknowledge the gospel of creation: all things were made in, through and for Christ and are being reconciled in Christ.

The Uniting Church believes that God calls us into a particular relationship with the rest of creation, a relationship of mutuality and interdependence which seeks the reconciliation of all creation with God.

The Basis of Union expresses this hope and situates it at the very heart of the church's mission:

“God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation. The Church's call is to serve that end.”

Together we recognise:

The ongoing concern of the Uniting Church in Australia since its formation in 1977 for the wellbeing of our planet that has been expressed in numerous statements.

The unique place and wisdom of First Peoples of Australia in relation to the land. The Preamble to the Constitution of the Uniting Church recognises that:

The First Peoples had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonisers; the Spirit was already in the land revealing God to the people through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the First Peoples and gave them particular insights into God's ways.

The Churches of the Pacific, with whom we are a part of the Body of Christ, and the Pacific Conference of Churches, to which we belong, are leading the response to climate change. We hear their call and witness to us; and recognise their prophetic, practical and pastoral actions among their people.

Dominant forms of the Christian tradition have been complicit in the abuse of creation, often accompanied by the belief that the world is given to use as we please, and the perspective that "more is better".

The island nations in the Pacific are being disproportionately harmed by climate change, and are among the most vulnerable to rising sea levels and climate change induced natural disasters

Climate change induced displacement is already a significant challenge, and grief both to Pacific countries and across the world; disconnecting people from their homes, their culture and their identity.

Climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific and across the world, and to all of creation including plant and animal life.

The intersectionality of issues – how climate change disproportionately impacts the poorest communities and on women and children, people living with disabilities, people with different gender identities - calls for relational and inclusive justice.

As participants of this conference, we are called to be God's co-workers, participants in the work of reconciliation and renewal for the whole creation. We believe that we have a moral responsibility to act, and that God is calling us to be bearers of hope.

Because of this, we commit to:

Working with First Peoples in Australia particularly through the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, sisters and brothers in the Pacific and other communities of faith to understand the impacts of climate change on traditional and contemporary ways of life and pay attention to the Indigenous Peoples' wisdom of living in right relationship with land, sea and sky.

Being compassionate, active listeners to the environment and people living with the reality of climate change.

Being thankful for all we have, recognising we have enough, enjoying the beauty and bounty of God's creation, resisting the pressures of consumerism and idolatry of material possessions.

Being responsible for our own actions and our impact on the environment, and calling for a renewed repentance, turning away from seeking more, towards a just sharing and harmony of all life.

Being a green Church by finding creative ways to engage our own communities in climate action, raising aspects of the environment in our worship, replacing disposable with sustainable products, reducing energy use and moving to renewable forms of energy.

Boldly raising our voices to advocate to governments to act on climate change and its effects in Australia, in the Pacific and the global community.



(#13.) For the Whole Creation

Fifteenth Assembly Resolution 18.12.01

July 2018

18.12.01.01 to acknowledge the Church's past and continuing commitment to addressing climate change (Appendix E);

18.12.01.02 to request the Assembly Resourcing Unit to develop the contents of proposal 19 as brought to the 15th Assembly as a discussion paper that contributes to this ongoing commitment;

18.12.01.03 to acknowledge with thanks the long history of advocacy and practical action on climate change carried out by the Uniting Church, including its synods, presbyteries, congregations, agencies, schools and members;

18.12.01.04 to work with First Peoples in Australia and our church partners in the Pacific, Africa and Asia and other faiths to together understand the impacts of climate change on traditional, spiritual and contemporary ways of life;

18.12.01.05 to encourage Uniting Church members, synods, presbyteries, congregations, agencies and schools to:

(a) continue to inform themselves and their communities about the causes and consequences of climate change and appropriate responses;

(b) advocate for government policies and political action to address climate change;

(c) listen to and learn from the voices of vulnerable people across the world who are experiencing firsthand the impact of climate change;

(d) consider ways we can reduce our contribution to climate change, individually and in our communities, set meaningful targets and be transparent with our efforts and outcomes; and

(e) tell stories of best practice across remote, rural and urban areas;

18.12.01.06 to request the Standing Committee to consider specific actions, resourcing and ways of connecting practically with other councils to address issues related to climate change.

Read Appendix E here: <https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/assemblies/Fifteenth-Assembly-Minutes.pdf>

(#12.) Investment in fossil fuels

Assembly Standing Committee Resolution 14.42.02-04

July 2014

It was resolved to:

14.42.01 receive the report;

14.42.02 note:

1. the long commitment of the Uniting Church to social, environmental, and intergenerational justice, which is expressed from our Statement to the Nation to For the Sake of the Planet and all its People and An Economy of Life;
2. the continued reluctance by governments around the world to take action sufficient to keep climate change within the internationally agreed limit of two degrees or less;
3. that the amount of carbon in listed reserves owned by the global top 200 fossil fuel companies is five times greater than can be emitted while limiting climate change to two degrees, and therefore that action on climate change would turn most of these reserves into “stranded assets”;
4. the resolution by the NSW/ACT Synod to divest from direct fossil fuel extraction and the recent resolution of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Standing Committee to divest from companies mining or exporting the most damaging forms of fossil fuels, in the context of a global campaign to divest from fossil fuels (“Go Fossil Free”); and

5. that the Assembly uses the Ethical Investment Principles of the NSW/ACT Synod and has substantial overlapping financial arrangements;

14.42.03

recognise that further investment in the extraction of fossil fuels contributes to and makes it more difficult to address climate change, and on the basis of the harm this will cause, further investment and extraction is unethical; and direct the Assembly Investment Committee to:

1. implement the divestment policy used by the NSW/ACT Synod; and
2. work closely with the Synod as it reviews the policy, particularly regarding the „net materiality“ approach and the viability of excluding companies based on reserves; and

14.42.04

- a) congratulate the Synods of NSW/ACT and Victoria and Tasmania on their work towards divestment from fossil fuels,
- b) commend this course of action to other Uniting Church entities as they make their investment decisions; and
- c) commend the movement to divest from fossil fuels to our ecumenical partners.

(#11.) Reconciliation People: A Statement from the National Young Adult Leaders Conference of the UCA (2012)

Thirteenth Assembly Resolution 12.10

“As future caretakers of the land that we live in, we are upset at the misuse of the natural environment for greed and consumerism and the lack of compassion towards those affected. Our country is not responding enough. Knowing that our country is positioned to make a significant international commitment to climate change, we will act responsibly by advocating for investment in renewable energy and endeavouring to make responsible, ethical decisions in our day to day living.”

Source: For a World Reconciled, p 14

(#10.) An Economy of Life: Re-imagining human progress for a flourishing world

**A Uniting Church in Australia Statement
adopted by the Twelfth Assembly**

July 2009

Resolution 09.21

RESOLUTION

- 09.21 The Assembly resolved:
- 09.21.01 to adopt the Statement, “An Economy of Life: Re-imagining human progress for a flourishing world”;

- 09.21.02 a) to commit itself and call on members, councils and agencies of the Uniting Church to:
- (i) examine their lives as Christian disciples and communities that they may first of all serve God in the world through the love, compassion and generosity extended to all our neighbours;
 - (ii) examine their lives in order to identify where and when they behave in ways that deny human and ecological wholeness;
 - (iii) examine their lives in order to identify where and when monetary interests are placed ahead of human and ecological wellbeing;
 - (iv) identify, develop and implement alternative systems, structures and processes within the church that promote the practice of the economy of God and model a way of being in the world which promotes human wholeness, equity and ecological sustainability;
 - (v) challenge rampant consumerism and materialism as antithetical to what is necessary for a healthy and sustainable world and engage in public conversation about notions of sufficiency, abundance and the fullness of life;
 - (vi) challenge the commodification of people, the exercise of the profit-motive when it denies people without wealth access to essential services such as water and electricity, decent healthcare, education and other essential social services, and the recasting of education as merely a tool for producing productive human beings; and
 - (vii) advocate social and economic policies which
 - are based on relational rather than mechanistic models
 - support the growth of vibrant, safe and inclusive communities
 - overcome poverty and injustice, addressing, as first priority, the needs of people who are most vulnerable
 - dramatically and urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption
 - support the research, development and implementation of clean and renewable energy, and
 - prioritise peacemaking and seek to end militarism;
- b) to call on Australian governments to develop economic systems and structures which recognise that human and ecological flourishing require much more than the creation of wealth by ensuring that public policy seeks to address first and foremost the wellbeing of all people, especially those most vulnerable, and the environment, including
- (i) regulatory reform of financial markets including systems of greater accountability;
 - (ii) the reduction of military spending and redirection of human and financial resources towards peacemaking;
 - (iii) the reform of the Australian tax and transfer system to make it a progressive tool for the equitable distribution of wealth, including taxing the most wealthy at an appropriate level and providing adequate income support for those people who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged;

- (iv) the provision of universally accessible and affordable essential services such as water and electricity;
 - (v) workplace relations policies which ensure just working conditions – fair and sustainable wages and conditions, with adequate protections especially for low-skilled low-paid workers, job security and predictability of hours;
 - (vi) the recognition of the importance of shared (community) leisure time, reasonably priced and readily available childcare, and paid parental leave;
 - (vii) the increase and prioritisation of support for renewable energy over support for climate polluting industries; and
 - (viii) urban planning which is marked by a commitment to enhancing and protecting ‘the commons’ (public space including parks, art galleries, performance spaces and community centres), ensuring that people have access to workplaces close to home, public transport, schools, healthcare and social services, and an understanding of people’s inherent need of spaces and places of beauty and quiet;
- c) to call on the Australian Government to work with other national governments and multilateral institutions to redevelop a global economic system that is regulated, transparent and accountable, for the wellbeing of people and the planet, and includes action that
- (i) renews and strengthens global action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals;
 - (ii) immediately and dramatically reduces greenhouse gas emissions through the development and use of renewable sources of energy, the reduction of our dependence on fossil fuels, and the saving of the world’s oceans and forests;
 - (iii) commits to ending the stranglehold of the military-industrial complex on the global economic system;
 - (iv) develops a practice of ethics and social justice that can guide financial markets in the world;
 - (v) regulates ‘the market’ and holds it accountable for unjust and exploitative practices, environmental damage, excesses of greed, the fostering of rampant and damaging consumerism;
 - (vi) creates a new international financial architecture developed under the aegis of the United Nations where broad participation of all countries and civil society can take place and which creates a process for the democratisation of all global finance and trade institutions;
 - (vii) encourages the development and sustainability of local economies through localised and sustainable systems of food production and consumption, fair trade, microfinance and incentives for investment in rural, regional and Indigenous communities; and
 - (viii) recognises the intrinsic value of cultural heritage (including sites, language and customs) as an expression of the wholeness of humanity and ensures its conservation, and

- d) to call on the Australian Government to shift its rhetoric from the focus on continual and unlimited growth and redefine how Australia measures its progress as a nation in terms of wellbeing rather than monetary indices such as GDP, doing so in such a way that these measures eventually become primary and directive.

Full Statement – See <http://www.unitingjustice.org.au/just-and-sustainable-economy/uca-statements/item/461-an-economy-of-life-re-imagining-human-progress-for-a-flourishing-world>

Key environmental points:

An invitation to join “the great work of the twenty-first century”:

- The point is not to find *the* solution (for there is no *one*), but to foster all the ways that every human enterprise, including theology, can help us imagine and live a different abundant life, one that will make the earth healthier and people happier. This is the great work of the twenty-first century. Never before have we had to think of everyone and everything all together.¹ (preamble)
- Christians, believing that God is love, that it was out of love that God gave birth to the world, that all that is necessary for life to flourish is provided by the Creator and that God’s will is for the flourishing and reconciliation of all creation, live life out of genuine hope, believing that transformation is possible. This is not a wild or shallow optimism that is satisfied to rest on the idea that all will be OK in the end, but a commitment to engage as active participants in the reconciliation of the world with God. (p8)
- God’s economy is an economy of life which flows out of the sacredness of life. Life and all its riches are both an expression of God’s very being as creative love and a gift of God. As sacred gift, the riches of life must be approached with humility, regarded with reverence and respect, and valued as precious, never being taken for granted.

As we seek to address the failings of the current global economic system, the values of an economy of life would find their expression in an economic system which places the needs of people and the planet before profit. It would be characterised by such principles as:

- the abundance of the earth’s resources, food and water, managed in a just, participatory and sustainable manner, for the benefit of current and future generations;
- reduction of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions as an immediate high priority for international cooperation, national, local and individual action;
- local economies encouraged (on an eco-regional basis and within ecological limits) and supported by the global economy;

¹ Sallie McFague (2001) *Life Abundant: Rethinking theology and economy for a planet in peril*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, p. xiv

- ‘the commons’ (wilderness, forests, deserts, rivers, oceans and shared public space, including parks, community centres, galleries and performance spaces) valued more than the profits derived from the private development of such spaces;
- urban planning marked by the consideration for people’s wellbeing: the need to easily access workplaces, public transport, schools, healthcare and social services, and by an understanding of people’s inherent need of spaces and places of beauty and quiet; and
- our ‘progress’ measured not in monetary terms but as human and ecological wellbeing², including how well we achieve the building of just, peaceful and sustainable societies where individuals are secure in their lives, free from fear, violence and persecution, and able to participate in a meaningful way in their community and society. (p9)

(#9.) For the Sake of the Planet and all its People: A Uniting Church in Australia Statement on Climate Change

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

Resolution 06.101

It was resolved to:

adopt the statement “For the Sake of the Planet and all its People: A Uniting Church in Australia Statement on Climate Change” (Attachment B);

encourage Uniting Church members, congregations, groups, agencies and councils to

- a) model ways of living and working that minimise the production of greenhouse gas emissions;
- b) seriously and regularly include matters of environment and lifestyle change in prayer and worship, study, and communal decision making; and

encourage Uniting Church members to

- a) advocate for government to implement policies that significantly reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and increase our use of non-nuclear renewable energy sources;
- b) engage in dialogues, shared learning and action with non-government environment action groups.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE PLANET AND ALL ITS PEOPLE

² In Australia and throughout the world, systems of measuring human and ecological wellbeing are being developed, trialled and used. Examples include the work of the New Economics Foundation (UK) on their Measure of Domestic Progress (MDP) which adjusts national accounts for a variety of social, economic and environmental factors not included in the standard GDP measure and the development of Genuine Progress Indicators (GPI) in countries such as the United States.

A Uniting Church in Australia Statement on Climate Change

In its first public statement in 1977, the Uniting Church in Australia expressed what would be an abiding concern with the wellbeing of the planet for the rights of future generations:

We are concerned with the basic human rights of future generations and will urge the wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth's resources for their use and enjoyment.³ The natural environment is, however, not merely a resource for the benefit of human beings but has intrinsic value as part of God's good creation. In 1991 the Uniting Church declared that, "Nature has a right to the protection of its ecosystems, species, and populations in their inter-connectedness".⁴

The Uniting Church's commitment to the environment arises out of the Christian belief that God, as the Creator of the universe, calls us into a special relationship with the creation – a relationship of mutuality and interdependence which seeks the reconciliation of all creation with God.⁵ We believe that God's will for the earth is renewal and reconciliation, not destruction by human beings. The foundational document of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Basis of Union, expressed this as the very heart of the Church's mission:

God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation. The Church's call is to serve that end.⁶

Since its inauguration the Uniting Church in Australia has been concerned about the continued existence of all creatures and plant life and believes that nature is not to be plundered and abused. We must acknowledge, however, that the church has been complicit in the abuse of creation. We have lived out a doctrine of the domination of nature by accepting and engaging in practices that have failed to safeguard the integrity of creation. We have supported systems and structures that exploit the natural environment in the service of human greed. We make this confession and we renew our commitment to move towards sustainable non-exploitative living, believing that God's creation—the earth itself and all the life that it supports—is precious and the earth's resources exist for the good of all now as well as future generations.

The Uniting Church regards climate change as a serious threat to the future and integrity of life on earth. The scientific evidence on global warming and its potentially disastrous impacts is now indisputable. Also beyond dispute is that the burning of fossil fuels and subsequent creation of greenhouse gas emissions and our worldwide failure to plan for a sustainable future is seriously exacerbating the problems we face. The threat posed by climate change therefore challenges the way we live in a fundamental way. If we are to meet and overcome the challenge we must think creatively about the organisation of our social and economic institutions, our relationship with each other across national and cultural boundaries and our relationship with the environment.

³ Statement to the Nation, Inaugural Assembly, Uniting Church in Australia, 1977

⁴ The Rights of Nature and the Rights of Future Generations, Sixth Assembly 1991, Resolution 91.14.18, Uniting Church in Australia

⁵ Submission to the Federal Environment and Heritage Committee Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter, UnitingCare NSW.ACT, May 2006

⁶ Basis of Union (1992 edition), paragraph 3, Uniting Church in Australia

It is increasingly the case that some humans consume the earth's resources whilst other humans pay the price. As one of the world's major producers of greenhouse gas emissions on a per capita basis, Australia must acknowledge that it has a responsibility to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. As long as we remain prepared to abuse the atmosphere and entire ecosystems for the sake of short-term economic gain for a few, we undermine our own future. It is important that Australia's social, economic and environmental policies begin to reflect that social justice and ecological justice are not competing interests, but have shared solutions.⁷ It makes good economic and political sense to spend money ensuring the long-term well-being of our natural world – there can be no security for humanity without a healthy ecosystem.

The Uniting Church in Australia believes that it is important for the Australian Government to set and commit to meeting serious targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions primarily through the promotion of renewable energy sources, measures to reduce energy demand and promotion of energy efficient measures. It is essential that this work be done in partnership with state and local government, business, industry and civil society.

The Church has a long history of concern with the nuclear fuel cycle⁸ and remains unconvinced about the use of nuclear power as a solution to global warming. We believe that the continued research, development and implementation of renewable energy are absolute priorities for governments and industry in order to minimise greenhouse gas production. As a matter of urgency we must reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

The impact of climate change will affect some of the world's poorest people first. The Uniting Church is particularly concerned with the fate of some of our most vulnerable Pacific neighbours. Our partner churches in the Pacific have called on their sisters and brothers in the Church throughout the world to act in solidarity to reduce the causes of human induced climate change by ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, reducing energy use and developing clean, renewable energy sources.⁹ Lives, livelihoods, societies, cultures and ecosystems of the Pacific Islands have already been affected by rising sea levels, diminishing agricultural space, diminishing reserves of fresh water and changing weather patterns including more frequent and unpredictable storms. The Uniting Church has called on the Australian Government to prepare to provide assistance for the peoples of the Pacific as they are forced to leave their homes and their land." Solutions must be found which ensure that the unique cultural and linguistic heritages of the various Pacific Island nations are not lost.

The situation in the Pacific is a clear signal to us that in order to secure our future, we must change how we live as nations, communities and individuals. Now is the time that governments, business, community and faith-based organisations must commit to working together to address the impacts of climate change for the sake of our planet and all its people.

⁷ No Security Without Justice, a resource for Uniting Church members for the Federal Election 2004, Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly

⁸ Nuclear Fuel Cycle Policy, Assembly Standing Committee, Resolution 00.22, Uniting Church in Australia, March 2000

⁹ The Otin Taai Declaration, The Pacific Churches' Consultations in Climate Change, March 2004

(#8.) Global Warming and its Impact on Pacific Nations
ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY, UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Resolution 06.21.04

The Assembly resolved:

- a) to reaffirm the decision on the Tenth Assembly (Minute 03.18.01) which called on the Australian Government to ratify the Kyoto Protocols in relation to global warming because of the impact of rising sea levels on the nations of the Pacific; and
- b) to call upon the people of the Uniting Church to adopt lifestyles which have a minimal impact on global warming.

(#7.) Tuvalu and the Impact of Global Warming

TENTH ASSEMBLY, UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Resolution 03.18.01

The Assembly resolved:

03.18.01

- (a)
 - (i) to call on the Australian Government to immediately sign and ratify the Kyoto Protocols in relation to global warming, especially because this has affected the nation of Tuvalu and other Pacific countries;
 - (ii) to call on the Australian Government to offer the guarantee of special immigration status to the people of Tuvalu, for immigration to Australia when their nation loses its viability for human habitation;
- (b) to express our solidarity with the Christian Church of Tuvalu in this predicament and to call on our people to remember the people and church of Tuvalu in their prayers.

(#6.) May the Land Lie Fallow (Caring for the Earth)

Assembly Standing Committee Resolution 00.73.02a-d

00.73.02 "It was resolved to, in the spirit of the Year of Jubilee:

- a) note its 1991 commitment to the Rights of Nature and Rights of Future Generations (Assembly minute 91.14.18) and affirms that this statement remains as relevant today as when it was first written;
- b) acknowledge that we are in a covenant relationship with God, the earth and humanity as described in Genesis 9;
- c) confess that both as individuals and as a Church community we have not adequately cared for the earth and as a result dishonoured this covenant;
- d) invite congregations to reflect on the Rights of Nature and Rights of Future Generations and consider how to enact this commitment within their local context.”

Source: For a World Reconciled p. 243

(#5.) The Rights of Nature and the Rights of Future Generations

SIXTH ASSEMBLY, UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Resolution 91.14.18

The Assembly resolved to adopt the statement on the rights of nature and of future generations.

Statement: The Rights of Nature and the Rights of Future Generations

We believe that God, the Creator, upholds human dignity. God has created the human in the divine image. No human authority can take away or contest the dignity thus bestowed upon the human.

We believe that God has blessed humanity and that God's faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

We believe that God loves the divine creation and wills the development of its life. No creature is indifferent in the eyes of God. Each has its dignity and thereby also its right to existence.

The Holy Scriptures attest to God's covenant with the creation. "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature" (Genesis 9:9-10).

In view of the fact that this promise is today being undermined by human lack of moderation, we affirm the inalienable dignity of all humans and call for the recognition and guarantee of human rights throughout the world, we express the conviction that those who live today share responsibility for the ability of future generations to live in dignity, we support the attribution of rights not only to humans but also to nature, God's creation, and we reject the view that animate and inanimate nature are mere objects which stand at the arbitrary disposal of the human.

We call upon the churches to make room for God's covenant with creation within the realm of law by committing themselves at all levels to recognition of the following "Rights of Future Generations" and "Rights of Nature".

A. Rights of Future Generations

1. Future generations have a right to life.
2. Future generations have a right to an unmanipulated human genetic inheritance, that is, a genetic inheritance not artificially altered by humans.
3. Future generations have a right to a rich plant and animal world, and thereby a right to a life within an abundant nature and to the preservation of multifarious genetic resources.
4. Future generations have a right to healthy air, to an intact ozone layer, and to the sufficient thermal exchange between the earth and space.
5. Future generations have a right to clean and sufficient waters, and, in particular, healthy and sufficient drinking water.
6. Future generations have a right to healthy and fertile soil and to healthy woodland.
7. Future generations have right to substantial reserves of non-(or only very slowly) renewable raw materials and energy sources.
8. Future generations have the right not to be confronted with products and wastes of earlier generations that threaten their health or require excessive expense for protection and control.
9. Future generations have a right to "cultural inheritance", that is, to an encounter with the culture created by earlier generations.
10. Future generations have in general a right to physical living conditions that allow them a humanly dignified existence. In particular, they have a right not to be forced to accept physical alterations deliberately produced by their predecessors that inordinately restrict their individual and collective self-determination in cultural, economic, political, or social respects.

B. Rights of Nature

1. Nature – animate or inanimate – has a right to existence, that is, to preservation and development.
2. Nature has a right to the protection of its eco-systems, species, and populations in their inter-connectedness.
3. Animate nature has a right to the preservation and development of its genetic inheritance.
4. Organisms have a right to a life fit for their species, including procreation within their appropriate ecosystems.
5. Disturbances of nature require a justification. They are only permissible when the presuppositions of the disturbance are determined in a democratically legitimate process and with respect of the rights of nature; when the interests of the disturbance outweigh the interests of a complete protection of the rights of nature; and when the disturbance is not inordinate. Damaged nature is to be restored whenever and wherever possible.
6. Rare ecosystems, and above all those with an abundance of species, are to be placed under absolute protection. The driving of species to extinction is forbidden.

We appeal to the United Nations to develop a new Declaration which explicitly protects the rights mentioned above. Simultaneously, we appeal to the individual nations to incorporate these rights into their constitutions and legislation.

(#4.) Statement on Nuclear Deterrence, Peace and Disarmament

Assembly Standing Committee Resolution 88.62

Includes: “God’s reconciliation in Jesus Christ is addressed not merely to humans but to all life. The righteous God who redeems sinners is at the same time the God who has created the universe, who sustains it by the power of the Holy Spirit, and who seeks its radical renewal, thus transforming all into healed and peace-filled life.

The implication here is that reconciliation includes the natural environment and therefore requires a special regard for the whole ecological system.”

Source: For a World Reconciled, p 80

(#3.) Statement to the Nation

Australian Bicentennial Year Resolution 88.18

“We affirm our belief that the natural world is God’s creation; good in God’s eyes, good in itself, and good in sustaining human life. Recognising the vulnerability of the life and resources of creation, we will work to promote the responsible management, use and occupation of the earth by human societies. We will seek to identify and challenge all structures and attitudes which perpetuate and compound the destruction of creation.”

Source: For a World Reconciled, pp 9-10

(#2.) Uranium Mining and Nuclear Resolutions:

The Uniting Church has a policy of a moratorium on uranium mining. See:

Statement on Uranium.

Second Assembly Resolution 79.26 (6)

Uranium

Assembly Standing Committee Resolution 85.158

Nuclear Fuel Cycle

Assembly Standing Committee Resolution 99.30.02

Nuclear Fuel Cycle Policy

Assembly Standing Committee Resolution 00.22

Includes a resolution (00.22.03) to “adopt the key statement ‘The UCA is committed to the development of environmentally benign, renewable energy sources and the cessation of

uranium mining. Recognising the complexity of the issues we call on individuals, churches, industry and governments to work together to end involvement in the nuclear fuel cycle’.

And to (00.22.05) “encourage individual members, congregations, presbyteries, synods and the Assembly of the Uniting Church to:

- study and reflect on the Policy Statement*;
- act upon the intent of the Statement by
 - o seeking to reduce energy needs;
 - o investigating and engaging in the use of environmentally benign, renewable sources of energy as quickly as is practicable;
 - o contributing to the 1 per cent fund for Nature and Future Generations; “

*Including the principles “embodied in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches’ document ‘Rights of Future Generations – Rights of Nature’” and the principle of “the participation of churches and ecumenical bodies, nationally and internationally, in calling for the responsible care and use of God’s creation, and seeking a nuclear-free world”.

“00.22.06 request the National Social Responsibility & Justice Agency to:

... set up, promote and administer a 1 per cent fund for Nature and Future Generations. Contributions to this fund shall be voluntary. The purpose of this fund is to:

- fund the preparation of educational resources concerning the nuclear fuel cycle and its impacts;
- fund congregational initiatives in environmentally benign, renewable technologies.
- Fund advocacy related to the nuclear fuel cycle and its impacts;
- Fund advocacy related to research and development of environmentally benign, renewable sources of energy;
- Support Indigenous participation in negotiations relating to issues of the nuclear fuel cycle;

... continue in dialogue with environmental, alternative energy and anti-nuclear organisations...

... seek opportunities for dialogue and common action with agencies of other churches and ecumenical bodies, nationally and internationally, calling for the responsible care and use of God’s creation, and seeking a nuclear free world...”

00.22.08 includes “work toward an internationally-agreed self-funding management plan of all fuel and wastes which guarantees the long term protection of people and the environment”.

00.22.09 welcomes the Australian Minerals Industry Code for Environmental Management and urges its adoption.

00.22.10 welcomes steps by government to encourage businesses to explore alternative energy sources.

00.22.11 “call on government to initiate a more active program including:

- direct government initiatives in developing models of energy use which minimise production of greenhouse gases and increase the use of environmentally benign, renewable resources;
- tax credits for those working towards development of renewable, environmentally acceptable alternatives, and tax penalties on those who fail to meet targets set by government for reduced pollution; significant increases in the provision of subsidy support for initial research, development and implementation of potentially viable alternative energies, with a view to becoming a leader in research, development and implementation of environmentally benign, renewable alternatives;
- target government purchases towards enterprises consistent with these policy objectives;
- do all in its power to accelerate the move in Australia from commitment to uranium mining and involvement in the nuclear fuel cycle towards more acceptable alternatives”.

Source: For a World Reconciled, pp. 236 - 242

(#1.) Statement to the Nation

Inaugural Assembly 1977

Includes: “We are concerned with the basic human rights of future generations and will urge the wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth’s resources for their use and enjoyment.”

Source: Coghill & Poulos (2016) For a World Reconciled, Media Com Education Inc., p 7