

The title of my presentation is 'from little things big things grow!' It's actually the title of a song by Australian songwriter Paul Kelly.

Pax Christi Australia is little! we have approximately 200 members in all of Australia. The largest number of members being in Victoria. In NSW there are about 60 members on our database of this number there are about 10 – 15 active members who come to meetings. Others, as most likely other states, carry out various tasks that do not always come to light immediately. In Queensland there are under 10 members and only a few active members. We do not have a secretariat all work is carried out by volunteers.

What do we do about combating Climate Change? As Pax Christi Australia not much! We publicise any actions that fall within any of our concerns including – Refugees – Climate Change – Nuclear Issues – LBGTQI on an extensive email list managed by Claude Mostowik, our website and Facebook. Claude manages four websites: his own with over 1200 friends which overlap with the Pax Christi Facebook page, Pacific Climate Watch and Australians for Marriage Equality. We don't have a huge following but we continue to use social media as one place of education and engagement.

Change the question to what do any of our members do to combat climate change? Now I can respond to this question

There are a number of very active Pax Christi members working with other groups who do alot to combat climate change.

Fr Claude Mostowik has recently returned from Bonn Climate Change Conference COP23. Fr Claude is officially the Chair of Inter Congregational Voice on Climate Change and the Pacific which consists of representatives from religious congregations who have worked in the Pacific or continue to do and have experienced some of the effects of climate change or share the pain of people so affected. Claude's role at this meeting was to support and accompany four young people from the Pacific Island nations of Kiribati (pronounced Kiribass) and Tuvalu. Both countries are directly affected by climate change as rising seas begin to claim their land, ruin crops, contaminate water, affect the health of the people particularly children. Fr Claude recently recorded interviews with three of these young people. This is great stuff to hear these young people who are feeling now the direct consequences of climate change. Go to Claude Mostowik's Facebook or Pax Christi Australia Facebook for a listen.

Fr Claude has participated in one other COP in Doha, Qatar, in a similar role as recently. The important thing to remember is that we stand in solidarity with these people and help to amplify their voices about their situation. We do not speak for them. This is the work of the Pacific Calling Partnership which has for some years brought to Australia young people to train them to be leaders in their own communities who can speak to media, politicians and in public about their situation. Again, the Partnership was a response to calls from these Pacific nations for assistance but not to do the work for them.

Marita McInerney who is Pax Christi NSW's secretary volunteers 2 days a week at Pacific Calling Partnership which is located at the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education which was an initiative of the Christian Brother's initiative and established to challenge popular beliefs and dominant cultural values, to ask the difficult questions, to look at life from the standpoint of the minority, the victim, the outcast and the

stranger. ii Marita does a lot of administrative support work for events and functions that are to take place as well as organising international trips to and from Kiribati and Tuvalu as well as the nightmare of organised necessary visas. Marita is a valuable addition to the PCP team.



The interfaith organisation, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, was recently involved in the Mega Climate Petition which was conducted around the country by volunteers to obtain signatures from the public. This action operated on several levels. It was legal and not confronting by providing opportunities for conversations about climate change with parishes and different faith communities even in those regarded as conservative on these issues. It was a consciousness raising action... if my church/faith group/synagogue/mosque thinks this is important I'd better support it. Separate petitions were held in each electorate and presented to the politician by the volunteers. This challenged politicians to be responsive to the people in their electorates and then they had to present the petitions in parliament so the whole parliament could hear the concerns of the public on these issues. Pax Christi members were part of this action along with members of parishes and religious congregations.

A short video was produced and can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/IHkvRhUB7G8>

Gill Burrows participated in a Mother's Day action May 8th 2016 with a group *Break Free from Fossil Fuels*. Gill was arrested along with 57 of the other protestors. Gill went to court and she addressed the court with the following statement:

Your Honour

It is with sorrow that I stand before you today – a BSc graduate, a wife, mother, grandmother and law abiding senior citizen.

I stand here today because of the absolute urgency of addressing the climate crisis our world is facing.

I am sorry because all the legal actions I and hundreds of others have taken – signing petitions, writing letters, taking part in vigils, rallies, huge marches etc. – all have been to no avail. Our country continues to promote the use of coal and other fossil fuels known to play a major role in the CO2 pollution driving climate change, instead of embracing and promoting a swift transition to the many non-polluting, economically attractive, renewable energy options available.

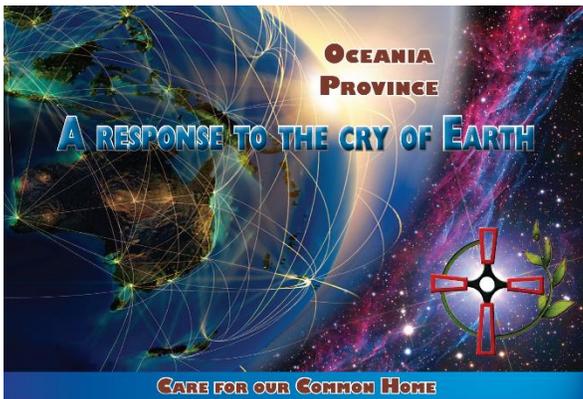
As a practising Christian I am passionately concerned about the need to Care for our Common Home - as Pope Francis describes in his letter to all people – Laudato Si

As a mother and grandmother, I also recognise our responsibility for the world we leave for future generations. How would I answer my grandchildren when they ask what did you do about climate change?

Therefore, on Mothers' Day May 8th 2016, feeling I had exhausted all other options, with some trepidation I joined with 60 other committed, courageous, concerned people – of all ages – in a nonviolent civil disobedience action in Newcastle as part of the larger BREAK Free from fossil fuels action to close Newcastle coal port - one of many civil disobedience actions taking place around the world.

This was not an easy decision for a respectable, middle class, law abiding grandmother like me and as I said at the outset I am deeply saddened that such action is necessary. However, my conscience would not allow me to do otherwise.

Brother Gary Wellsmore who was introduced to you in our introduction Pechu Kucha is a Christian Brother. He has sent me a statement by the Christian Brothers Oceania Province. The statement draws heavily on Pope Francis's Laudato Si ⁱⁱⁱ



To live a simple and shared lifestyle with accountability, which calls us to a radical shift from our comfortable way of living

QLD Pax Christi members and other Pax Christi members in other states are actively opposing the establishment of a new Carmichael Adani coal mine in Northern Queensland. If this mine goes ahead there are grave concerns for the life of the Great Barrier Reef. Selling this coal to India will significantly increase world carbon emissions which will then put at risk the Paris Climate Summit agreement and increase the world temperature. The Australian government relentlessly pursues this project even in spite of credible world investors stating that this will be a short term gain but a long term loss, as markets move to alternative energy projects.^{iv}

Although we at Pax Christi Australia are little - we hope that from our littleness big things will grow!

I must say at this point that Joe Camilleri was one of the founding members of ICAN in Melbourne in 2007. The organisation has grown worldwide and has just received the Nobel Prize for 2017. Congratulations to ICAN.

ⁱ <https://www.facebook.com/Pax-Christi-Australia-106685886053133/>

ⁱⁱ http://www.erc.org.au/our_purpose

ⁱⁱⁱ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

^{iv} <https://www.wheelercentre.com/broadcasts/giving-for-the-common-good-stephen-heintz-on-philanthropy>

Advocacy (Phil Glendenning)

Advocacy helps to transform policies and services that affect the lives of marginalised, poor and displaced people, and Earth's natural environment, on a national, regional and global level. It aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions in order to enhance human rights, environmental protections and eco-justice. This can involve lobbying governments, politicians, and decision-makers, and supporting campaigns in favour of those whose rights have been denied.

But it is more than this.

Advocacy also involves *working with* those made excluded, poor, dispossessed and displaced, in order to build *their* capacity to reclaim *their* rights, to make *their* voice heard, and to be empowered to be the subjects of *their own* development, rather than the objects of others' expertise, knowledge, or good intentions.

Advocacy for Edmund Rice people is also about *mutuality*, creating right relationships, in the belief that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God, and that the Earth is their home. Thus we work together with those we seek to assist and serve, (through education and training, capacity-building, campaigning and witnessing) to remove the last remnants of the poverty, violence, racism and oppression that limits human life, threatens the whole of creation and the future of the planet.

Advocacy is envisioning, promoting, and creating a world where all people are able to live their lives to the full, as Jesus intended, with respect and dignity, on a living, vibrant and sustainable planet Earth.

The truth of the Gospel will not be revealed at the centre; you have to go to the edges.