



ARRCC

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change

MEDIA RELEASE

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RELIGIOUS ALLIANCE LAUNCHES TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Approximately 50 representatives from more than four different faith groups celebrated the official launch of a new multi-faith climate change network in Sydney on Monday.

A diverse range of people from religious traditions including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and the Baha'i Faith gathered at the al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences and Human Development in Lakemba to celebrate the formation of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC).

According to Imam Afroz Ali, a founding member of ARRCC, and Founder and President of the al-Ghazzali Centre, nothing replaces positive faith-based action. "I want you to go back to your leaders, and tell them to get down from their pulpits and get their hands dirty in addressing climate change. Religious voices and religious actions are needed on this most pressing issue of our times", he told the gathering.

Motivated by the conviction that climate change is a moral and spiritual issue about the responsibility to safeguard creation, and to protect the poor and future generations, ARRCC aims to support and inspire people of faith across Australia to take action on climate change.

At a time when people can feel overwhelmed by the issue of climate change or overtaken by other concerns, ARRCC also brings a message of empowerment. "We people of faith want to act in true hope. Communities and people of faith are called to believe that change is possible and we are a part of it," said ARRCC President Thea Ormerod.

The al-Ghazzali Centre is an example of the kind of changes that a faith community can make. The centre has switched to Green Power, and at the launch announced its intention to install compact fluorescent lighting in the homes of 200 or more community members as well as a solar hot water system at the centre. Until the solar system is installed, the centre will use only cold water, including for ritual ablution. The centre also one of the first faith communities to participate in the Renewable Energy Fundraiser for Places of Worship. The Fundraiser is an initiative of ARRCC and Jackgreen, in which participating faith communities will receive a financial reward when their members switch to Green Power.

These are the types of actions that are applauded by The Most Reverend Kevin Manning, Catholic Bishop of Parramatta, another of the speakers at the launch. "Small actions count, and small actions build community", he said.

ARRCC advocates not only for practical action at the community level, but also for changes at the broader political level. In demonstrating that they themselves are willing to respond to the challenge of climate change, the ARRCC network calls upon others to do likewise. ARRCC will join Australians from all walks of life at the Walk Against Warming on 15 November to send a message to the government to take the steps that are necessary to protect the world's poor and future generations.

Notes to editors:

For more information and photographs of the launch phone ARRCC Secretary, Miriam Pepper on 0447 730 772, or President, Thea Ormerod on 0405 293 466.