

# **Becoming an Eco-Congregation**

**an environmental check-up for  
parishes**

Derived, with permission from the *Eco-Congregation Program*,  
by the Commission for the Environment of the Anglican Diocese of  
Canberra and Goulburn

*Eco-Congregations* is a partnership program of 'Churches  
Together in Britain and Ireland' and 'ENCAMS'

# eco-congregation — resource modules order form

This environmental check-up is designed to help Parishes:

1. Identify and affirm their existing environmental ministry
2. Prioritise what they would like to do next and identify supportive resources
3. Assist the Diocese in developing appropriate and relevant programs to support Parishes in their environmental ministry

## 1. Life and Mission of the Church

The Five Marks of Mission is a model that can help churches identify their strengths and weaknesses. First formulated by the 1988 Lambeth Conference and adopted since by many denominations and ecumenical bodies, it has been widely used in church life. Note your church's activities for each Mark and assess whether care of the environment has sufficient weight within your church's mission:

### Mark of Mission

### Activities

**Mark 1:** To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom, e.g. preaching.

**Mark 2:** To teach, baptise and nurture new believers, e.g. children's work, membership/Alpha Course.

**Mark 3:** To respond to human need by loving service, e.g. pastoral visiting, hospital ministry.

**Mark 4:** To seek to transform unjust structures of society, e.g. supporting a housing charity, promoting fair trade.

**Mark 5:** To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation; to sustain and renew the life of the earth, e.g. having energy efficient premises, area for prayer/contemplation/outdoor worship.

A church with a holistic mission has activities related to each of the Five Marks. As well, as a Church we cannot speak out on environmental matters if we have not got our own house in order!

# eco-congregation – resource modules order form

## 2. Worship

Worship is the prime focus of Christian life from which the Church's life and mission flows. This section is designed to help you identify how thankfulness and concern for God's creation are expressed in your worship:

**How regularly during the year are environmental concerns included in worship?**

- Never                       Occasional services  
e.g. Harvest Festival, Rogation Sunday,  
Creation Sunday (at beginning of spring), St Francis' Day (4<sup>th</sup> October),  
One World Week                       Frequently

**In your Church's prayer life do you:**

(tick any that apply to your church)

- Praise God the creator     Say sorry for the harm done to the environment  
 Give thanks to God for the gift of creation     Pray for the healing of creation  
 Praise God on behalf of all Creation

**Does your Church connect with God's gift of creation through worship?**

(tick any that apply to your church)

- Through occasional outdoor services     Through prayer walks  
 Using natural materials within worship

**Does your Church sing hymns or songs that celebrate the wonder of creation or express the calling to care for the environment?**

- Regularly                       On special Sundays                       Hardly ever

## 3. Theology

Theology is concerned with giving and exploring a rational and orderly account of Christian belief, drawing on Biblical studies, Church tradition and history, ethics and the context in which the Church lives. Does your parish:

- | Yes                      | Con-<br>sider            | Not<br>priority          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | have access to Christian environmental books and resources?                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | participate in or organise study/exploration events that include environmental issues? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | include creation/environmental issues in its teaching/preaching programme?             |

# eco-congregation — resource modules order form

## 4. Children's work

Christian children's work can inform, inspire and encourage youngsters as they grow in faith. Use the check-up to identify if your children's programme (infant and primary age) includes environmental issues and the potential for developing this ministry:

Category of activity	Sometimes (tick those that apply to your church)	Never	Has potential to develop
Junior Church/Sunday School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uniformed organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playgroups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After school/holiday clubs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In schools e.g. through RE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All age worship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 5. Youth work

Churches undertake a range of youth work including Sunday focussed groups, church and open youth groups and mid-week uniformed organisations. If your church undertakes/is planning to develop youth work, review your existing activities and consider future possibilities:

Have done	Could consider	Activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold a debate on environmental issues and personal responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop creation-care material to offer in worship
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undertake a practical environmental/conservation project
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrange a hike(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organise an environmentally focussed community event (with young people from a range of churches/organisations?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assess how environmentally-friendly the Parish is and make recommendations for action

## 6. All-age and Adult education

Church is a place where people can grow in faith from cradle to grave. Relating key topics, like environmental issues, with Christian thinking can be inspirational and faith-affirming. What opportunities are or could be available for your church?

Have done	Could do	Not current priority	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undertake an environmentally themed Bible study
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Invite a speaker on environmental issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organise/participate in a creation-care lenten group

## 7. Church property

Good stewardship of energy and maintenance issues can both reduce your Church's impact on the environment and save your Church money, particularly in the long-term. Use the check-up to assess your church's current environmental stewardship of property (churches, halls, clergy housing) and the potential for developing this.

Have done	Consider	Not priority	Energy- heating and light
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor energy consumption regularly (monthly?) to check trends
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Switch to green electricity

# eco-congregation — resource modules order form

- |                          |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Regularly service boiler or heating appliances  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Choose appropriate sized rooms for activities   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Timetable meetings to minimise heating use  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Heating system with timer and thermostatic controls   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Commission an energy/environmental consultation<br>(particularly useful if considering a new heating system or refurbishment or if any boiler is older than 15 years) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fit draft excluders around windows and doors  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Install appropriate levels of insulation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clean windows to maximise natural light   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Encourage building users to switch off unnecessary lights and not leave items on stand-by (e.g. photocopier)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Replace cracked or broken windowpanes   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Install low-energy light bulbs where appropriate  |

## Water

- | Have done                | Con-sider                | Not priority             |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Install a water meter and monitor water consumption regularly (monthly?)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Check water outlets and fix any drips and leaks  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Install water-saving devices e.g. dual flush toilets and low spray flow or auto turn-off taps, drip irrigation systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Collect rainfall from down pipes for use in gardens  |

## Building maintenance

- | Have done                | Con-sider                | Not priority             |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Choose timber from sustainably managed forests, and reclaimed materials where appropriate |

## Access

- | Have done                | Are planning             |  |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  | Facilities for hard of hearing and visually impaired       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  | Access for wheelchair and push chair users                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  | Toilets for disabled and baby change facilities for carers |

## 8. Church management

Churches are responsible for the good stewardship of money and a range of consumables. Use this section to assess your church's existing good practice and identify issues for consideration and action:

### Financial management & purchasing policy

- | Have done                | Con-sider                | Not priority             |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consider and be satisfied by the environmental policy of your bank |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have an ethical investment policy for any savings                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use environmentally-friendly cleaning materials & paint            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Purchase recycled paper (to boost demand for recycled products)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Purchase fairly-traded products (e.g. tea and coffee)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use local suppliers where possible                                 |

# eco-congregation — resource modules order form

(so promoting a sustainable local economy and reducing transportation)

**Have done**   **Con-sider**   **Not priority**

       
     

## Catering

Use crockery rather than disposable cups and plates  
 Use farmers' markets and other local suppliers  
 (to promote local economy and reduce food miles)

**Have done**   **Con-sider**   **Not priority**

       
     

## Waste minimisation

Collection facilities for recycling items that church members, building users or local community can **USE** (e.g. paper, spectacles, stamps, printer cartridges, shoes, foil)  
 Hold jumble sales to raise funds, recycle goods and promote the availability of goods at affordable prices

## 9. Church Land

Many churches are responsible for land varying in size from a tiny patch to a large acreage. Use this section to assess the community/visual/ environmental/ecological/ value of your church's plot and the potential to develop it:

**Present**   **Potential to develop**

     Native plant species and plants that attract wildlife (e.g. nest or roosting sites, native trees, shrubs, lichens, fungi, wildflowers)  
      Weeds and plants that endanger the natural environment (e.g. remove weeds like Patterson's Curse and garden plants like rubber plants, privet and lantana)  
      Other features to benefit wildlife (e.g., piles of leaves or rotting logs for insects, small mammals and reptiles, close cover for small birds)  
      Visually attractive planting/features  
      Area for prayer/contemplation/outdoor worship  
      Area for recreation

## 10. Personal lifestyle

Use this section to assess what your church is currently doing to encourage individuals to green their lifestyle and the potential to develop this mission

**Have done**   **Con-sider**   **Not priority**

       
        
     

## Greening personal lifestyle

Publish green tips in any church/parish magazine  
 Promoting awareness through posters or information from environmental organisations (e.g. home energy audit)  
 Encourage recycling by providing collection points or informing people of civic facilities

## 11. Community outreach

Churches can work with and through their local community to improve the quality of their neighbourhood and build links. Use this section to assess the links that your Church already has in the local community and the potential for further development.

**Have done**   **Con-sider**   **Not priority**

       
     

## Community outreach/mission

Establish links with community organisations with a view to sharing your environmental ministry (e.g. schools, youth groups, Clean-up Australia, catchment management groups, other local environmental bodies)  
 Advise building users of your environmental concerns and request that they utilise any environmental facilities

## eco-congregation — resource modules order form

- |                          |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Participate in local environmental initiatives or policy formation – your local Council may advise             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Draw on links that members have with environmental bodies e.g. Friends of the Earth, Wildlife Trust, RSPB      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Support or initiate community schemes with a positive environmental element (e.g Clean-up, LETS, Credit Union) |

### 12. Overseas Concerns

Living simply that others may simply live is a facet of Christian life. What does or could your church do to benefit the environment and people across the world?

<b>Have done</b>	<b>Con- sider</b>	<b>Not priority</b>	<b>Community outreach/mission</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support the work of Christian development agencies (e.g. Christian Children's Fund, World Vision, Tearfund)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Initiate or participate in activities in One World Week
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Promote fair trade (eg develop a church stall selling goods from Tradewinds etc)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Explore environmental issues through any linked or twinned overseas community or church
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support the work of international conservation/ environment agencies (e.g. A Rocha, WWF, Friends of the Earth)

## Churches environmental check-up: Action Plan

Use this template (or your own expanded version) to summarise your church's existing good environmental practise and identify future initiatives. English material for Parish use on each of the areas listed below can be downloaded from [www.encams.org/ecocongregation](http://www.encams.org/ecocongregation). The modules available are listed below.

	<u>Activities already undertaken</u>	<u>Future priorities/initiatives</u>
Worship		
Theology		
Children's work		
Youth work		
Adult education		
Premises		
Finance		
Church land		
Personal lifestyle		
Local community		
Global concerns		

The Commission on the Environment is happy to advise on material for developing projects in any of these areas. The following English Eco-Congregation modules are also available for Parish use:

### **Grounding in Faith**

- Module 2 Celebrating creation!**  
Ideas and resources for worship
- Module 3 Creation and Christianity**  
Some green theological perspectives

### **Growing in Faith**

- Module 4 Acorn to oaks**  
Ideas and activities for children's work
- Module 5 Tread gently – go green**



# eco-congregation — resource modules order form

Ideas and activities for youth groups

- ☐ **Module 6 Exploring God's green word**  
An address and two sets of Bible Studies for house groups

## **Managing in Faith**

- ☐ **Module 7 Greening the cornerstone**  
Guidelines on caring for Church premises
- ☐ **Module 8 Greening the purse strings**  
Management of financial, catering and purchasing matters
- ☐ **Module 9 Planting and conserving Eden**  
Practical ideas and advice to care for Church grounds and land

## **Living in Faith**

- ☐ **Module 10 Green choices**  
Information and suggestions to green personal lifestyles
- ☐ **Module 11 Community matters**  
Ideas to help Churches work with, through and for their local community
- ☐ **Module 12 Global neighbours**  
Sources and resources to help Churches think globally and act locally.

### **Please note:**

- approval has been obtained for the use of these modules by Australian Parishes
- modules are downloadable from: [www.encams.org/ecocongregation](http://www.encams.org/ecocongregation)
- Parishes may freely photocopy modules for use but must not sell them.

# eco-congregation — resource modules order form

## Who we are

For **more information** about Eco-Congregation Web and to discover what other churches have done visit: [www.encams.org/ecocongregation](http://www.encams.org/ecocongregation)

**Write:** Eco-Congregation, ENCAMS, Elizabeth House, The Pier, Wigan WN3 4EX

**Tel.** 01942 612633 **Email:** [ecocongregation@encams.org](mailto:ecocongregation@encams.org)

For **more information** about the Diocesan Commission for the Environment and links to other Australian Christian Environmental activities visit [www.pastornet.net.au/envcomm/](http://www.pastornet.net.au/envcomm/)

## Supportive Christian environmental organisations

**A Rocha** – Christians in Conservation is an international conservation organisation working to show God's love for all creation. Web site: [www.arocha.org](http://www.arocha.org)

**Christian Ecology Link** – is a membership organisation for those who wish to demonstrate care for God's creation in their faith and lifestyle. Web site: [www.christian-ecology.org.uk](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk)

The **John Ray Initiative** (JRI) is an educational charity with a vision to bring together scientific and Christian understandings of the environment. Web site [www.jri.org.uk](http://www.jri.org.uk)

Church of Scotland **Society, Religion and Technology Project** (SRTP) promotes an understanding of key issues confronting society as a result of current and emerging technologies. SRTP support and deliver Eco-Congregation in Scotland. Web: [www.srtp.org.uk](http://www.srtp.org.uk)