

ARRCC writes to the Catholic Bishops' Conference

Thursday, 03 November 2011 (<http://www.arrcc.org.au/letter-catholic-bishops-conference>)

As an organisation that brings together people from all of the major religions in Australia, ARRCC has been listening to the concerns of some of its members regarding the anti-climate change position of a prominent religious leader in the Catholic Church - Cardinal George Pell. In response to these concerns, ARRCC has written to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

ARRCC encourages its members to read the letter and consider writing their own letter to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference expressing their concerns. ARRCC members from the Catholic tradition may also wish to send a copy of their letter to their local priest, expressing their own views on climate change as well as their concerns regarding Cardinal Pell's position. ARRCC also believes that it is important that everyday people understand that Cardinal Pell's anti-climate change views are NOT representative of the views of the Catholic Church and encourages both Catholic members and members from other traditions, to respond to people's concerns/claims using the information below.

The text of ARRCC's letter is below.



Thursday, 3rd November, 2011

The Most Reverend Phillip E Wilson DD JCL
President Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
GPO Box 368
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Archbishop Phillip Wilson,

It is disturbing to read articles in the newspaper informing Australians of the views of Cardinal Pell on climate change. For example, the Australian newspaper, on Saturday, reported on a talk given by Cardinal Pell.

Our concern is that the public is left with the impression that, because the Cardinal holds an official position within the Catholic Church, his position is the official position of the Church. Furthermore, his views are given prominence via his media and communications office, while

comparatively little or no publicity is given to the often stated views on this issue of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI himself. Australians are left with only the Cardinal's view and not that of His Holiness.

Regrettably, Cardinal Pell himself does not mention that his views are at variance to those of the Australian Catholic Bishops or His Holiness. His views on climate change are contrary to those of:

- His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI
- The Pontifical Academy of Science
- The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference
- National Academies of Science around the world
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

We see this as damaging both to the Catholic Church and to progress that Catholics could be making towards the "ecological conversion" called for by Pope John Paul II. It is damaging to the Church because people of goodwill, who conscientiously listen to considerable consensus among reputable climate scientists, are left believing that the Catholic Church holds anti-scientific views.

It is damaging to action on climate change because it requires some moral resolve to respond with integrity to the problem. When a person is given reason to doubt the anthropogenic nature of climate change by a respected religious leader, motivation to act is undermined. This is not consonant with the intentions of His Holiness, nor of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

We urge you to consult with Cardinal Pell and encourage him to reflect the teachings of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI before the public promotion of his views does more damage.

Yours in peace,

Ms Thea Ormerod

President

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC)

A copy of this letter was also sent to the Pope's representative in Australia, His Excellency, the Most Reverend Giuseppe Lazzarotto.