**Motion # 20**

**Climate Change Action Plan**

**Mover**: Mr R Oram **Seconder:**

**That this General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui 2018:**

Recognising the threat that anthropogenic climate change poses to the health and wellbeing of all God’s creatures, including human beings, in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia and in all the Earth, for present and future generations,

Emphasizing the Church’s mission to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth, and to seek to transform the unjust structures of society,

Mindful of the urgent need for greater action on climate change by the Church and wider society,

Rejoicing in the creativity and power of people working together at a flax-root level,

1. Tasks each Diocese and Hui Amorangi to demonstrate its commitment to this urgency by:

(i) Creating a strategy for, and resourcing of, local and regional responses to climate change, and

(ii) Approving these strategies at their synods in 2018 or 2019 and submitting them to the Environment Portfolio Group, and

(iIi)  To work collaboratively with the Environment Portfolio Group to incorporate these strategies and actions into a multi-faceted Climate Change Action Plan for the province to be submitted to GSTHW 2020.

2. Supports this work of the Environment Portfolio Group with adequate staff and financial resources.

**Explanatory note:**

Climate change is accelerating and can be largely attributed to human activity. It is already having damaging consequences, and the projected impacts over the 21st century and beyond are very large in scope, scale and cost. We need to act urgently to prevent disastrous consequences.

In response, the nations of the world have made some progress, at least in their commitment to tackling climate change. Most notably, 175 nations have ratified the 2015 Paris Agreement (and 195 of 197 countries have signed). But in aggregate, their commitments are insufficient to keep the rise in global temperatures to below 20C above pre-industrial levels. Of much deeper concern is the inability of many of them to adequately progress their commitments.

New Zealand is no exception on both scores. Our Paris commitment is to cut our greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. This target is equivalent to 11% below 1990 levels by 2030.

“If most other countries were to follow New Zealand’s approach, global warming would exceed 30-40C, a world that would see oceans acidify, coral reefs dissolving, sea levels rising rapidly, and more than 40% species extinction,” says Bill Hare, CEO and Senior Scientist at Climate Analytics, one of the science partners in Climate Action Tracker.

Worse, our greenhouse gas emissions are rising not falling. The key causes are a failure of government, business and wider society to devise and implement effective policies, strategies and responses.

However, that picture is now changing fast. The new Labour-NZ First-Green coalition government has pledged a Zero Carbon Act, which would require NZ to achieve net zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. There remains uncertainty about whether this goal is (or should be) net zero GHG emissions or net zero CO2 emissions. (Net zero means any residual emissions would be offset by carbon capture in forests and other carbon sinks.) From this Act will flow a number of crucial bodies such as a Climate Commission to set emissions reduction budgets, and the policies and progress towards meeting them.

Moreover, there is a clear shift in the business community with an increasing number of companies large and small adopting emissions reduction strategies. Likewise, there are signs of increasing climate change responses in civil society.

Thus, it seems likely New Zealand’s response to climate change will accelerate rapidly in coming years. This will lead to very substantial changes the nature of our economy and society over the next few decades. So far the best analysis of this is coming from the Productivity Commission, which was tasked by the previous government to recommend a range of policies to progress these changes. Its final report is due out in June. But it offered a sense of the enormity of the changes in this quote from its first Issues Paper on the subject last August:

*“…the shift from the old economy to a new, low-emissions economy will be profound and widespread, transforming land use, the energy system, production methods and technology, regulatory frameworks and institutions, and business and political culture.”*

As a Church, we’ve already begun the journey. For example, at GSTHW 2014 we committed to fossil fuel divestment and have made good progress on it; our Diocese of Polynesia is recognised internationally as a source of insight and action appropriate for its position as one of the areas of the world worst affected already by climate change; a number of other diocese such as Wellington and Auckland have had part-time fieldworkers and climate change action groups dating back some years; and we are involved in an inter-denominational group that has, for example, made submissions to the Productivity Commission and other government inquiries, and offered advice to our Church leaders on their public responses to climate change.

However, now is the time for us to step up our efforts as individuals, and together at local, diocesan and provincial levels. This motion seeks a practical way to encourage, share and co-ordinate that work so we can play an ever-growing role in society’s drive for deep sustainability.

While much of that work will be of practical nature in common with other people and organisations, the Spirit of God is our greatest gift to them and ourselves. Our faith, theology and liturgy speak powerfully to our relationship with, and responsibility to, God’s creation, which is our very life support system.

As we work on restoring our right-relationship with creation, we can offer that hope and encouragement to many others. We can do much by working together within and across ministry units, diocese and tikanga, with the help of the new Environment Portfolio Group within General Synod’s new Social Justice structure.