

## **JPIC Commission Member: Sandra Menteith**

Sandra Menteith has been a member of the JPIC Commission since 2005. She previously worked as a hospital pharmacist and in mid-life completed a theology degree. Sandra teaches as an occasional lecturer in Christian Ethics at the Catholic Institute of Sydney with research interests in Environmental Ethics and the Eco-theology. She served on the interim advisory body to Catholic EarthCare Australia for two years.



*“The calling for me has always been to work across boundaries, building connection and thus possibility of working in creative, collaborative partnerships; assisting church-based groups to integrate concern for the Earth at the core of their faith; working with those in the broader community to see the deep, spiritual issues at the heart of our environmental problems; and where possible bringing these groups together.”*

In 2000, Sandra found a home for four years as Office Manager of OzGREEN Global Rivers Environmental Education Network) one of the few environmental NGOs at the time that brought together concerns of both environmental *and* social justice, working on water issues, both in Australia, as well as East Timor and India, and Education for Sustainability. Programs in Australia include MYRiver (run down the Murrumbidgee, Darling & Murray rivers), YouthLEAD and ‘Living Waters, Living Communities’.



As well as being a member of the Franciscan JPIC Commission, Sandra has worked with a wide variety of religious and lay groups: the Columban campaign on TRIPs and Genetically Modified Food crops, the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance, The Grail, the Pacific Calling Partnership, FEN (Faith and Ecology network), various local councils, churches, schools and community groups doing workshops, presentations, Lenten studies and consultant work.

In late 2006 with the challenges and urgency of climate change growing, Sandra was a driving force behind the establishment of CANWin (Climate Action Now, Wingecarribee), the local climate action group in the Southern Highlands of NSW as part of a commitment to help build the critical mass of people needed to bring about social change. CANWin has been active in raising public awareness and lobbying politicians at every level. Sandra developed “Climate Change Circles”, a six-week

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program for small, facilitated groups as a way of building community around sustainability at the grass roots level, and fostering the kinds life-style changes that are required to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Most recently Sandra has been devoting her time to the "Transition Towns" project, recently coordinating a national workshop with two visiting UK speakers to support people to take the 'Training for Transition' forward in Australia. The gathering had representatives from every sector, all called by the common vision of a transformed world. Sandra and the local Transition team will be running a series of 2-day workshops throughout 2009. Further information about this initiative will be forwarded in a Friar Update.



Members of the Bundanoon Transition group have been actively involved in making the village Australia's first bottled-water free town- a community initiative that has generated unprecedented national and international media coverage and worldwide support. It is exciting and heartening that the actions of this team from a village of 2500 people are rippling around the globe!

Sandra lives in the wonderful community of Bundanoon (NSW) where she enjoys learning to grow (and eat) fruit and vegetables in her home food garden, with husband Bob, dog Winston, and her two ducks.

*Francis of Assisi loved creation: in it he found the love of God. His love was not confined to popular or beautiful species. According to Francis, God created everything and thus everything bears God's imprint, deserves respect and is worthy of relationship. Francis' love of God and God's creation is powerfully expressed in the Canticle of the Creation.*

*Lord, give us the grace to respect and protect Mother Earth and the take bold steps to eradicate the wounds inflicted on the earth. Amen*

Sources:

<http://canwin.org.au/your-say/>

<http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com/file/view/earth%20community.pdf>

Read the SMH article at <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/water-issues/bundy-votes-on-bottled-water-ban-20090707-dbv.html>

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