



Greetings from FEN, the Faith Ecology Network, an Australian hub for strengthening an interfaith dialogue between science and religion.

August 2025 Newsletter

Greetings FEN Friends and Supporters

Members of the Faith Ecology Network have been very busy since the June issue of our newsletter. The need for listening, dialogue, reflection and action between and across faith and science communities of all persuasions grows ever more important. Earth, our common home, is crying out for our caring responses. It is encouraging to learn about some of these from interfaith and ecology networks around Australia and overseas. I feel energised and happy that we are able to share them with you in this edition of FEN Enews. If they prompt ideas from you, I invite you to then share them on to your networks. AND to send your own stories back to us. We love them AND they are much needed in the wider community!

Next month, September, is Biodiversity Month. We urge you to get ready to take action for biodiversity. We will be doing a special email campaign to write to Federal, State and Local government representatives to do adopt stronger protection laws.

Anne Lanyon
FEN Co-ordinator

FEN Local News

Hyper-local News
 We have created six hyper-local news sites full of stories of local action from Lapstone to Lithgow, with local events, weather, air quality reports & more.

Lower Mountains Local News
 Springwood Area Local News
 Mid Mountains Local News
 Katoomba Area Local News
 Blackheath Area Local News
 Lithgow Area Local News

Visit The Site

Stay Connected
 Be part of the solution. Get Planetary Health News straight to your inbox, twice a month.

Final Online Workshop – TEN Ways to Care for Biodiversity

On June 24th, Peter Branjerdporn, Justice Enabler of the Anglican Church, Southern Queensland, presented some of the work he has been involved in Developing and Using Green Calendars. “If in each of our church or mosque, or synagogue, or temple we tried to learn the local season, the local calendar, wouldn’t that enrich the way we live immeasurably?” asked Peter as he introduced his examples of a Carbon Fast during the Christian Season of Lent and other practical examples. Liz Bastion is the Senior Lead for Blue Mountains Planetary Health Initiative. In her presentation on Sharing Successes, Liz led us in thinking about the stories we tell, and the notion that if we change the story, we change the culture. She spoke strongly about local government as being important land managers and suggested that FEN networks work with local government. Please watch this Workshop video and check out all other previous ones at www.tenwaysbiodiversity.org/workshops.



Yalumbin (Mt Warning), Lisa Buxton's Kinship Country

Perspectives on Earth Kinship from Diverse Faith Traditions

In an online partnership with Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA), held on July 24th, the first of many more, we hope, Michelle Maloney, National Convenor of AELA co-hosted with Anne Lanyon, FEN volunteer Co-ordinator. Four presenters from the FEN network spoke. Everybody listened intently to Lisa Buxton, from Bundjalung and Yugambah Country, as she shared knowledge passed on from Uncle Max explaining natural phenomena in terms of Aboriginal kinship systems. We learnt so much more from Lisa. Dallas, a young ecologist from the Bahai'i community, shared important teachings from Bahai'i writings because she is passionate about the intersections between faith and the natural world. Mehmet Ozalp, a Professor of Islamic Studies told a wonderful story about how some members of his group have started hiking to a place and, after morning prayers, do a remembrance-of-God ritual at sunrise. It connects them to the natural world. He also mentioned the great disconnect with the natural world. Sally Neaves from Bathurst in Rural NSW spoke briefly about the historical context of the Christian church shift away from the original connection with the natural world which, over many centuries, emphasised power over the Earth. This can be said of other religions too. She then outlined briefly the shift back to greater ecological consciousness in more recent times, especially with the papal publication of Laudato Si. Please view the video recording of this significant webinar at www.earthlaws.org.au/event/kinship-24july/. We suggest that you use it with your faith or other community, and also feed back to us how you used it. Watch out for the next version of the FEN AELA partnership on Kinship From Diverse Faith Perspectives!



Govett's Creek

FEN Enrichment Day Sydney 2025

By Sue Martin, FEN Core Group Member

After a big trip up from Western Sydney, we all (14 FEN people) met in the Leura Cottage, a

beautiful old heritage house, very near Govett's Creek. The [Brahma Kumaris Retreat Centre](#) in Leura, is 132 acres of beautiful bushland and Govett's Creek flows through. Landcare meets there on the first Friday morning of each month, helping to restore and regenerate the land. We started with Tim Lanyon, local National Parks Officer, who looks after the visitor tracks across the Blue Mountains region. Tim asked us to walk outside and find something of interest or take a photo outside since a walk through the property was not possible because of the rain. We all chose something that interested us and spoke about how it prompted our connection with the natural world. Through that process, Tim shared many of the unique natural wonders of the Blue Mountains. The process was a good tool for people to take away and use with their networks.

The afternoon was spent dreaming big and also reflecting on how far we have come this year in finishing the workshops for each of the FEN 10 Ways to Care for Biodiversity. Some dreams for 2026 include finding ways to have FEN participate in Festivals maybe even the [Woodford Folk Festival!](#) It would be lovely to hold our annual Enrichment day again at Leura, such a wonderful place to reflect and encounter "God in all" in nature. I may even try and join the next seasonal BK Meditative Gardener Retreat to continue the connection with creation.



Opportunity to bring Ecological Consciousness in an Inclusive Narrative Project

The next Social Inclusion Round Table initiated by the Bahai'i community is on at Dubbo, NSW on Friday 28th August. Anne Lanyon participated one at the Bahai Temple Ingleside, NSW and found it a very good process in which to participate with local diverse community members in a safe environment. Bringing Ecological Consciousness into these conversations is important. If anyone would like to attend, please [REGISTER HERE](#).



Season of Creation in the Warrumbungles National Park

The [Season of Creation](#) is a global Christian initiative during September. It is a time to renew our relationship with the Creator and all creation through celebration, change of heart, and commitment together. During the Season of Creation, Christians join their sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for Earth, our common home.

The Laudato Si' Group of the Catholic Diocese of Bathurst, NSW has organised a celebration around the theme, "Seeds of Hope" at the Warrumbungles National Park, Coonabarabran and Barradine, from Saturday 4th October- Sunday 5th October 2025. Please book accomodation at either Camp Blackman: warrumbungle.np@environment.nsw.gov.au; Ph 02 6825 4364 or in Coonababarabran township.



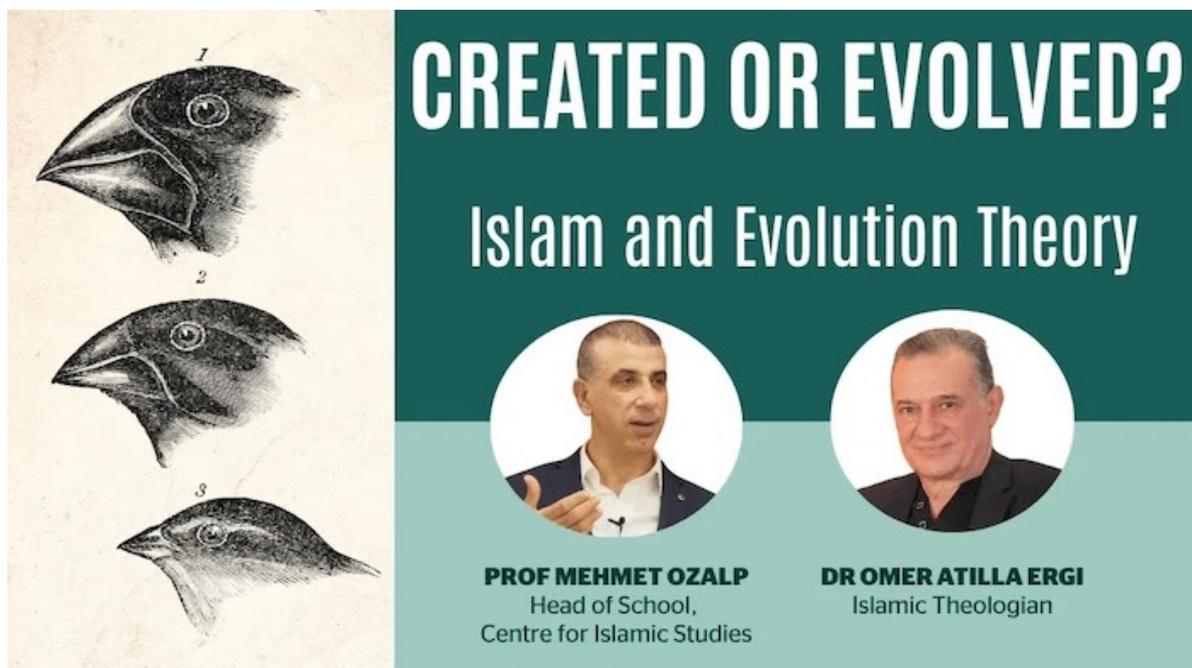
Everything is Interconnected

By Ayya Yeshe, Bodhicitta Dakini Monastery, Tasmania

Buddhists believe everything is interconnected. That means happiness isn't a personal

matter, it's a communal one. Our bodies are 75% water, we wouldn't exist without air, food and the planet and farmers who grow our food. We also are the result of spiritual, cultural and ancestral conditions. It is only when we return home to ourselves and gather all the lost strands of our attention and awareness, and touch peace that we may see this sacred and wondrous interbeing. Once we do, we are forever changed and can no longer harm beings, or the earth. This sacred connection to the earth, to community and ourselves, this mindful awareness and rootedness is what is missing in us, a sense of belonging and being part of the sacred. In the void of our disconnection - our sense of emptiness we put so many things like loveless sex, unhealthy food, fear driven or desire driven numbness and social media. It leaves us feeling dissatisfied, lonely and disconnected, but also somehow over stimulated. How could we have consumed so much, have so much information, think so much and yet feel so empty and lonely and exhausted? It's because we have forgotten we belong to each other and to the earth and we need to come home to peace, to the present moment, to awaken to sacredness and save the planet and community before it is too late. Consumption without wisdom is destruction. Only a radical shift back towards connection can overcome this raging Wetiko mindset.

Native American mythologies portray the mythical figure of wetiko as a cannibalistic spirit who embodies greed and excess and can possess human beings. The wetiko was once a human, but its greed and selfishness have transformed it into a predatory monster like creature. Thus in indigenous mythology, narcissistic, selfish and self-destructive habits are thought to be inspired by wetiko. In the Native American view, those who have become wetikos are individuals who have "lost their wits," a phrase that connotes not only being out of one's right mind, but also not knowing what one is doing (acting "unwittingly"). Without wise and compassionate awareness, we are like the Wetiko, we consume and destroy with no awareness and harm the planet and each other, acting against our own wellbeing.



CREATED OR EVOLVED?

Islam and Evolution Theory

PROF MEHMET OZALP
Head of School,
Centre for Islamic Studies

DR OMER ATILLA ERGI
Islamic Theologian

Created or Evolved? Islam and Evolutionary Theory

A Thought-Provoking Evening of Science, Faith, and Dialogue, this program brings together renowned scholars Dr Omer Atilla Ergi and Professor Mehmet Ozalp to explore how

modern evolutionary science intersects with Islamic theology.

Locations and Dates:

SYDNEY: Saturday, 23 August | 7.15pm-9.15pm, Novotel Parramatta, [350 Church St, Parramatta NSW](#)

MELBOURNE: Friday, 29 August | 8pm-10pm, ISRA Melbourne, 250 Hume Hwy, Somerton VIC

See More: www.isra.org.au/events/created-or-evolved

FEN Global News



Women's Leadership Training in Indonesia

By Sr Zubeda Raihman, FEN Core Group Member.

From 11-15 July 2025, Zubeda as President of the Muslim Women's National Network of Australia, attended this program in Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia. The theme was to empower Muslim women to lead sustainable change in their communities through enhancing Islamic Values on conservation and management of our natural environment that is deteriorating because of our inconsideration and abuse over a long period of time.

The training focussed on Islamic eco-consciousness and transformative conversations through women's activities in sustainability efforts. Islam has a rich tradition of highlighting the importance of environmental protection and conservation of natural resources. According to Islamic law, the basic elements of nature – land, water, fire, forest, and light – belong to all living things, not just human beings.

“And the earth, He has assigned it to all living creatures”(Quran 55:10).

The privilege to use natural resources was given to the mankind on a guardianship basis, which implies the right to use another person’s property on the promise that it will not be damaged or destroyed. The Holy Quran commands human beings to avoid doing mischief and wasting resources as these acts cause degradation of the environment.

The key speaker - Deputy Minister of Economy of Malaysia and Chairperson of the Regional Dawah Council of Southeast Asia and the Pacific (RISEAP)- Dato Hajjah Hanifah Hajar Taib, emphatically told the participants from 12 member countries in the Southeast Asia region the importance of eco sustainability in our world today.

In this regard, Dato Taib advised the role each one of us can play towards the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which the Malaysian Government espouses, including: No Poverty – no one is hungry, Good Health and Wellbeing, Clean water and Sanitation, Responsible consumption and production, Sustainable cities and communities, Care for life on land and below water, Affordable clean energy, Decent work and economic growth, Reduced inequalities, Peace, justice and strong institutions, Climate Action.



FEN Tree Ordination Ceremony in Cambodia: Promoting the Sacredness of Trees

By Sue Martin, Jesuit Care for our Common Home Committee

Tree ordination ceremonies are a unique form of environmental activism that draw on Buddhist principles to protect forests and inspire a deeper awareness and care for the natural world. A key part of the ceremony involves wrapping a special tree in a saffron-coloured cloth, symbolizing that the tree is now sacred and must not be harmed.

These ceremonies often engage the entire community, fostering a shared commitment to preserving nature. Originally initiated by Buddhist monks in Cambodia and Thailand, tree ordination has evolved into an interfaith practice. Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Cambodia

has embraced this tradition, organizing tree ordination ceremonies during tree planting events and at the JRS Reflection Centre in Siem Reap.

Sr. Denise Cogan, a Sister of Mercy from Australia, has been based in Cambodia since JRS was officially established there in 1990 (though their work along the Thai border began in 1981). Sr. Denise has been a driving force behind promoting interfaith collaboration, including initiatives like Faith Harmony Week and encouraging environmental stewardship as a shared spiritual value.

As part of this continuing collaboration, FEN member Sue Martin visited the Jesuit Refugee Service Reflection Centre in July this year and was invited to participate in a tree ordination ceremony. The chosen tree stands at the entrance of the centre, wrapped in saffron cloth for all visitors to see—serving as a powerful reminder of the tree's sacredness and the call to respect and protect our environment.

Being part of the tree ordination ceremony was a deeply moving experience. It created a profound connection not just with that tree, but with all trees.

FEN Partner News



australian earth laws alliance

Read how AELA's [GreenPrints Project](#) aligns with FEN's [Ten Ways to Care for Biodiversity Framework](#). You can see how and why we are partners.



Australian Religious Response to Climate Change

ARRCC is part of Rising Tide

ARRCC is preparing for this year's Rising Tide Protestival / People's Blockade, Nov 27th – Dec 2nd. They have been preparing to be more visible as people of faith. There will be a Multi-Faith Sacred Service again on the Sunday morning on Horseshoe Beach and (hopefully) other faith-based gatherings. If you would like to be involved, contact them at info@arrcc.org.au



Biodiversity Council

The 7 key actions needed to respond to SA algal bloom

The Biodiversity Council has published a report outlining seven key actions needed to urgently respond to the algal bloom and to prepare for an increasingly dangerous and unstable future nationally. They include immediate investigation and action for species at high risk, reducing the drivers of blooms, and building preparedness and resilience for future events. See <https://biodiversitycouncil.org.au/resources/key-actions-needed-SA-toxic-algal-bloom>

We rely on your support to [employ a part-time Co-ordinator](#) to assist us.
We appreciate any assistance in achieving this goal.

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