Adelaide celebrates Environment Day

A multi-faith union of green hearts and minds helped mark the Adelaide Archdiocese’s celebration of World Environment Day on June 5 with the South Australian launch of the National Energy Efficiency Network (NEEN).

Almost 50 people from different faith-based and not-for-profit groups, including the Egyptian Coptic Church, Anglicans, Catholic Education South Australia and the Muslin Ahmadiyya Association, met at the St Francis Xavier Catholic Hall in Adelaide to learn more about the initiative being coordinated by Catholic Earthcare Australia.

NEEN is helping faith-based and not-for-profit organisations become more energy efficient and sustainable by connecting them to specialist energy efficiency information, energy savings calculators, community events and a digital open learning and collaboration forum.

Catholic Earthcare Australia director Jacqui Remond said at the launch that it was her vision to see 1000 member organisations across Australia join NEEN.

“It’s about doing this,” Ms Remond said. “We know energy efficient information needs to be more accessible to people who lead these organisations that are very busy.” She said “It’s a first step to address what we have to change in climate change.”

Meanwhile schools across the diocese celebrated World Environment Day in a variety of unique ways through special prayers, fundraising and activities.

St Ignatius’ College students, from the Leaders in Environmental Awareness and Protection group, organised the sale of locally-sourced green-iced donuts to help sponsor twin orangutans through the Orangutan Project. Prayers for the environment were shared at the College throughout the day.

Marymount College, in Hove, held a One Earth Day to mark World Environment Day and Reconciliation Week (held May 27-June 3). Indigenous dancers performed at the school following a Welcome to Country by Major Summer.

College sustainability coordinator Alica Dunlop said the College’s 490 students each wrote an affirmation on a paper leaf which would be collated to form an artwork of a life-giving tree. Other activities on the day included various sustainability events like gardening, indigenous dot painting, and moments of meditation and reflection.

“The environment is so important to our young people,” said Mrs Dunlop.

“As a Catholic school we recognise that God created the environment for us and we need to learn to care for it – that’s what we are called to do.”

Catholic Education South Australia religious education consultant David Hillard was involved in the Day of Listening Event held on June 24 (the feast of St John the Baptist). The eucharistic day was sponsored by the South Australian Council of Churches and the Eco-Mission Team of South Australia to raise awareness about the environment.

It involved people making a concerted effort to stop and listen to their surrounding environment and then writing a reflection for sharing. People were also invited to join a group at Victoria Square for an hour of listening followed by reflection and discussion.

GREEN THUMB: Philippa Rowland, NEEN SA and NT regional leader, and Fr Denis Edwards add some colour to the diocesan centre’s courtyard in the lead up to World Environment Day.

SAVING ORANGUTANS: St Ignatius’ College students raising funds for orangutans.

SHP-BER: [L-R] Uniting Church Reverend Nicholas Rundle, Catholic Education South Australia religious education consultant David Hillard and Lutheran pastor Geoff Burger listening to nature in Victoria Square.