

Melissa Shaw

My Personal Manifesto linked to (for me) key Earth Charter (numbered) elements:

- 1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity**
- 5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.**
- 15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.**

In secondary school I was a biology *enthusiast*. I was **astounded and fascinated by the diversity, evolution, origins and organisation of life** that this subject revealed to me. I thought my interests were in science, and that I might have a scientific career. However, I realised that I needed to do well in maths and all the science subjects to take my study further, so I came to terms with my limitations in these subjects, knowing that they would hold me back from this ambition. I retain my interest in and respect for all life forms. I believe that we ignore our co-dependency with all living things and Earth's resources at our peril.

- 2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love.**
- 11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity**
- 14. Integrate into formal education and lifelong learning, the knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life.**

Towards the end of secondary school, I stumbled across and was intrigued by social sciences: initially Economics. I recognised that I most easily and effectively learn overarching ideas to apply to specific problems and situations, and that this approach fitted well with assessment requirements for this subject. I went on to study Sociology, with Psychology and Economics at university and progressed into a career including secondary school teaching, and roles focused on equality and diversity, and learning and development in HE. Through this work I developed and fed my interest in and commitment to **actively addressing inequality and promoting fairness and inclusion.**

- 4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.**
- 7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being.**
- 8. Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired.**

Having become a grandmother, I feel a **powerful and direct interest and stake in the lives and experience of future generations.** I realise that my grandchildren's futures are coupled with the future of all generations now and to come. I realise that what we do, or neglect to do now will impact on the near and far future. The focus of my Lifewide projects over recent years has been on this personal commitment to family and our place in history and its impact on our future and the future of the planet.