



St Pius X, Catholic Primary School Laudato Si Action Platform Reflection

Introductory Statement

St Pius X is a two stream Catholic Primary School that is located within the Parish of Immaculate Conception in Unanderra and is one of the 30 Systemic Primary schools that belong to Catholic Education in the Diocese of Wollongong. The school caters for students in Years K-6 and has a current enrolment of 270 students.

In the early years, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan and the Sisters of St Joseph built a very strong foundation of community spirit at St Pius X. Our community understands the importance of ensuring the school reflects both its tradition in the Josephite charism and the Benedictine charism from the Good Samaritans. Mary MacKillop's words of "Never seeing a need without doing something about it" hold particular relevance for the ways in which St Pius X responds to the environmental challenges outlined in Laudato Si'. Likewise the Benedictine charism reminds us that all things are holy since they come from the hand of God and so we have a duty 'to cultivate and take care of' the good things of God's creation.

Our School motto is 'Omnia in Christo' – Restore all things in Christ, which encourages us to be the best we can be each day and we understand that this extends to us being the best that we can be for our world, our common home. This calls us to be sustainable stewards and responsible citizens that contribute to the building of a better future for humanity and our planet.

Environmental Vision

St Pius X School aims to provide programs and practices that care for our common home embedding within the school community a commitment to ecologically sustainable actions that promote and nurture ecological conversion.



Environmental education and action challenges our perception of teaching and school life, that we might be alert to and create opportunities through the integration of curriculum, prayer and liturgy, resource management, grounds management, whole school planning and school community that contributes to the betterment of our environment and our relationships with one another.

St Pius X, belongs to the system of schools in the Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong. Since 2015 following the release of *Laudato Si*, we have taken seriously Pope Francis' prophetic call for an ecological conversion and has proactively responded in a strategic, planned approach whereby sustainable practices and ecological values are promoted and supported across the system of schools in the Wollongong diocese.

Engagement with eco-spirituality, environmental education and action is a key component of our mission, of being Catholic and is viewed as “core business”, not an “optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience” (LS n217)

This strategic approach has involved schools embedding ecological values into school programs and practices that promote an ecological and sustainable culture, encouraging everyone to live out his/her ecological vocation and engage in caring for our common home.

St Pius X Engagement

CEDoW Environmental Education Action Policy

Catholic Schools have a missionary and ecclesial mandate that impels them to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. We are called to respond to the environmental crisis of the 21st Century by proactively engaging with Pope Francis' challenge from *Laudato Si* for an ecological conversion. This requires a strategic, planned approach whereby sustainable practices and ecological values are promoted and supported across the system of schools.



This involves schools embedding ecological values into school programs and practices that promote an ecological and sustainable culture that encourages everyone to live out his/her ecological vocation and engage in what Pope Francis describes as the ‘core business’ of caring for our common home.

St Pius X, use the CEDoW Environmental Education Action Policy to support school staff in meeting their compliance obligations according to the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) and the Australian Education Act 2013.

School Environment Management Plans (SEMP)

St Pius X, is currently into its second SEMP with further outcomes and actions addressed. There is a shared understanding amongst the staff of St Pius X, in their key role in the implementation of the SEMP and the wider school community is aware of sustainability and participates in environmental initiatives and actions. This will be actioned by:

- Sharing and promotion of School Environment Management plan with school community
- Providing students with opportunities to be involved and create materials for environmental days and celebrations
- Annual school award for students (word and action)
- Rotational roster system for shared environmental initiatives with in the school
- Document roles and responsibilities for environmental initiatives
- Ecological and sustainable practices and actions of staff
- Engagement in staff spirituality day exploring ecological conversion, eco theology and eco spirituality.
- Cross curriculum links in program
- Continued monitoring of energy and water consumption across the school community, especially in the older buildings on site.
- Explore options for replacement of bubblers system with a water refill station and reconnection of the water tank.
- Reinvigorate the Return and Earn Container Collection program.



A major action for St Pius X is to reinvigorate environmental initiatives such as return and Earn, Waste management bin systems that were in place prior to COVID-19.

ASSISI Framework

Across the focus areas St Pius X, Catholic Primary School goals of this plan are:

1. Whole School Planning

Environmental Plan (SEMP), Strategic Plan, Governance, Policy, Environmental Team

2. Religious Dimension

Catholic Social Teaching, Celebration, Liturgy, Prayer, Embedding of eco-theology and Catholic Social Teaching principles in RE Curriculum, Formation in eco-spirituality & theology

3. Teaching & Learning

Curriculum, Syllabus Perspectives & Materials, Professional Development, Environmental education integrated into all stages and KLAs, Scope & Sequences for environmental education, Curriculum links to environmental action in school

4. Ethical Resource Use

Individual and School Ecological Footprints, Administrative Practices, Waste Management – recycling, Green catering, purchasing, Audits

5. Caring for Country

Physical surrounds & Maintenance, Biodiversity - Grounds developed to enhance environmental education – eg. “Outdoor Living Classroom”, outdoor education, Landscaping (equipment, shade, safety and seating reflect an awareness and consideration of environmental impact)

6. Community Relationships

Networks and Partnerships - working closely with CEDoW personnel to support school wide initiatives, networking with neighbouring schools to share ideas/ resources, engaging local business to support schoolwide environmental initiatives. Student Life - sharing of key language and school based



initiatives via school newsletter to form a shared language and understanding of key ecological elements.

Professional Development and Staff Formation

St Pius X staff will participate in Staff Eco-Spirituality Days - 'Who Is My Neighbour? Called to Ecological Conversion'. 'Praise Be Living our Ecological Conversion' facilitated by CEDoW Beth Riolo.

CEDoW Environmental Education Grants Program

CEDoW's Environmental Education Grants aim to support Diocesan school communities in their journey of ecological conversion, assisting schools in specific environmental projects that are strategically planned for and connected to each school's SEMP (School Environment Management Plan).

These grants support schools to continue to, in the words of Pope Francis, "**care for our common home**" with "simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness, [and] actions that seek to build a better world".

St Pius X, have been fortunate to be awarded 3, \$2000 grants, to continue to 'Care for our common home'. In 2018, St Pius X implemented a bin system to reduce the amount of landfill and improved our recycling. In 2020, St Pius X designed and created a new garden area for the school community where fruits, vegetables, herbs, water features and sitting spaces were created. More recently in 2022, St Pius X will use the grant to install new refill stations to replace its current bubbler system.

WEN Contact

Each year, the WEN contact from each school around the diocese meet so we have a chance to network, share ideas and environmental actions as well as initiatives. Members aim to support school communities, respond to Laudato Si' and implement environmental stewardship and sustainability.



Earthcare School

Catholic Earthcare Australia wants to acknowledge the good works happening in schools and nurture their development, growing abundance in addressing our ecological challenges so that we can lead by example and follow our well-formed hearts with practical steps which engage the whole community in caring for our mother earth. St Pius X, Primary School's hard work has been acknowledged and has been awarded a Level 3 Certification Earthcare School.

Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement

Inspired by Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement – Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor and Bishop Brian's Diocesan Pastoral Message, St Pius X, have used the following two documents to guide our journey towards ecological conversion.

- [Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor](#)
- [Bishop Brian's Diocesan Pastoral Message](#)

Connections to values of St Pius X with the Laudato Si' Goals

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH

- Whole school systems to improve ecological footprint ie nude foods, recycling station, water hydration station
- Whole school participation in system approved environmentally focused days ie Clean Up Australia Day
- Whole school prayer and action ie World day of Prayer for Creation

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR

- Participation in system approved charities annually ie St Vincent de Paul, Caritas, Catholic Mission
- Action response to point of need within the local and wider community ie flood response,



local St Vincent de Paul chapter

ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

- Recycled paper now used in photocopier

ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

- Whole school systems to improve ecological footprint ie nude foods, recycling station, in class recycling, water hydration station
- Staff no longer use once off cutlery – items have been purchased to be reused not simply thrown away

ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- Modified teaching and learning experiences that ensure ecological education is embedded within appropriate units

ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

- Whole staff focused on spirituality day. Networking with professionals to support the correct/ rich formation
- Whole school prayer focusses throughout liturgical year to focus on environment/ environmental aspects/ saints

Environmental Education Achievements

At St Pius X, we have been engaged in various environmental actions and initiatives. The following is an outline of achievements across the school:

- Whole School Recycling incorporates RED bin - general waste, BLUE bin - paper and cardboard and GREEN bin - used for composting
- Whole school composting system
- Each grade is allocated responsibility for the maintenance of the watering of the vegetable and fruit gardens



- Students are involved in active participation of the planting, harvesting and caring for the vegetable crops that involves hands on and guided education sessions
- Vegetable and fruit gardens (seasonal) produce is sold for a gold coin donation with proceeds going back into maintenance of the gardens and fruit trees
- Lime, lemon, and mandarin trees maintained by the school community
- Participation in Clean Up Australia Day, National Tree Day, World Environment Day, Harmony Day, NAIDOC week, World Day of prayer for the Care of Creation and Earth Hour.
- Aboriginal dry river bed
- There is one water tank that provides water for the vegetable and fruit gardens.
- Students are encouraged to reusable water bottles through the refill station- grant to be used to finish off this process
- Staff formation in Laudato Si', eco-theology and spirituality (Who is my Neighbour? Called to Ecological Conversion, Environmental Action Staff Meeting)
- Have established community networks - Bunnings Warrawong, Wollongong Council and Wollongong Botanic Gardens
- Class monitors for energy usage. More recent buildings have timers for fans, lights and standby mode for TVs
- Return and Earn
- Staff rotational roster