



ST BRIGID'S CATHOLIC PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL, GWYNNEVILLE

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St Brigid's Catholic Primary School Gwynneville Reflection 2022

St Brigid's Catholic Parish Primary School is a one-stream school founded by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan in 1951. The school caters for students in years K-6 and has a current enrolment of approximately 200 students. Nestled in the foothills of Mt Keira we are approximately five kilometres from the large urban centre of Wollongong. Our students are generally drawn from our local village community and represent a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, which contributes to a good synergy and a strong sense of welcome and community.

Our school mission, "To Develop Leaders of Faith, Justice and Learning", along with our Catholic faith and our call to be stewards of creation, underpins our school culture and values. Being people of justice means that we work for justice for the earth and for the earth community. Our call is to listen with the ear of the heart to work for the common good and respond to our neighbour and all of creation with energy, loving generosity, and right relationships. For us leadership is being a positive influence for ourselves, others, and the world around us.

We are informed by the Benedictine charism of the sisters of the Good Samaritan which 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.

St Brigid's values and mission invite involvement in the wider community through its strong and extremely successful involvement in social justice and environmental issues, sports, and creative arts.

We consider a crucial aspect of our journey as being sustainable and responsible stewards caring for God's creation, our common home. In Pope Francis' encyclical document, *Laudato Si'*, he highlights the important role that education plays: *There is nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle.*

This School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) is a tool that will enable us to document, implement, reflect and celebrate environmental stewardship as we respond to the challenges from *Laudato Si'* to walk our own journey of ecological conversion. At St Brigid's we understand that we have a missionary and ecclesial mandate that impels us to participate and respond to the call to care for our common home with strategic planning, formation and concrete actions and it is within this context that this SEMP is formulated.



Developing leaders of faith, justice and learning

Since 2015 following the release of *Laudato Si'*, St Brigid's Gwynneville has 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 St Brigid's Gwynneville 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 Brigid's Gwynneville follows the CEDoW Environmental Education Action Policy. Each year, every grade actively participates in writing and implementing a unit of work based upon the requirements of the Environmental Education Action Policy.
- St Brigid's Gwynneville has completed a School Environment Management Plan (SEMP 1). We have planned and are currently implementing the goals outlined in our SEMP 11 which began in 2021 and is ongoing until 2024.
- The staff at St Brigid's Gwynneville participated in the Staff Spirituality Day, *Who is My Neighbour*. Called to Ecological Conversion, led by Beth Riolo. This professional development will guide and inspire the staff towards living our ecological conversion.
- St Brigid's Gwynneville has planned, submitted, and received two CEDoW Environmental Education Grants
 - 2020 - Subpod Composting Grow Beds
 - 2021 - Djeera Bush Tucker Garden and Woolyungah Dry River Bed
- Cathy Cuff, a staff member of St Brigid's Gwynneville, is an active and current member of Wollongong Environment Network (WEN) that aims to support school communities respond to *Laudato Si'* and implement environmental stewardship and sustainability.
- St Brigid's Gwynneville has attained Level 3 Certification Catholic Earthcare Australia School. This a formal recognition by Earth Care Australia as an "a school certified as level 3 and is now committing to a whole school ecological change.
- St Brigid's Gwynneville is inspired by Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement – Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor and [Bishop Brian's Diocesan Pastoral Message](#)
- St Brigid's School connects the values of our school with the *Laudato Si'* Goals 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.

Developing Leaders of Faith, Justice and Learning

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH

Participation in:

- Clean Up Schools Day Australia
- Earth Hour
- World Environment Day
- World Day of Prayer for Creation

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR

Engagement in:

- Project Compassion
- Vinnies Return and Earn
- Contributing to food and item collections for St Vincent de Paul throughout the year
- Clean Up Schools Day Australia
- World Day of Prayer for Creation

ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

- Off the grid with 42kW Solar photovoltaic system
- Digital communication rather than paper
- Sensor lights in high traffic areas
- Rainwater tank

ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

- Soft plastic recycling
- Underground Composting system via Subpods
- Changes to catering, eg. no plastic instead we use crockery and cutlery
- Encouragement of keep cups and reusable water bottles for staff and students
- Installation of water bottle refilling stations
- School vegetable gardens

ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- Participation in WEN Contact PD days
- WEN Primary Students days
- Sustainability scope and sequence - ensuring each grade implements an ecological unit.
- Nude food Tuesday
- Informing parents via the newsletter

ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

- Liturgies for significant Environment days
- Staff development days based on ecological conversion
- Overnight retreats on Stewardship and the Benediction Spirituality

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT

- Collection of Lids for Kids
- St Vincent de Paul collections – Winter and Christmas appeal
- Clean Up schools' day
- Vinnies Return and Earn

Developing Leaders of Faith, Justice and Learning

St Brigid's Gwynneville has been engaged in the Assisi Framework developed by Earthcare Australia. This framework has focus areas and goals regarding ecological conversion that is used as a framework in all ecological initiatives and goals. These five focus areas and related actions are:

Across the focus areas the 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, Student Life