



John Therry Catholic College Reflection 2022

Introductory Statement and Environmental Vision

John Therry Catholic High School was established in 1981 at Rosemeadow and is a co-educational, comprehensive Diocesan Catholic High School that is part of the systemic schools in the Wollongong Diocese. John Therry draws its students from the parishes of Rosemeadow, Campbelltown, Appin and Ruse. Students also enrol from outlying areas such as Picton and The Oaks and in excess of 20 State primary schools within the Macarthur region. Students come from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds and the school community has an inclusive attitude towards all students.

Rosemeadow is part of Dharawal country and John Therry Catholic High School has a large Aboriginal student population. At John Therry the school community takes pride in promoting Aboriginal Culture and Awareness, and do their utmost to welcome the Aboriginal Community.

The school mission statement is "To create a learning environment based on Catholic faith which empowers students and staff to achieve their potential as individuals in the wider community" and as such the goal is for graduates of John Therry to be confident and courageous young men and women who make a positive difference in their world.

The core values of the school are identified within the school motto "Recta Sapere" and its prayer "to know, love and relish what is right and just" and are demonstrated in a strong Catholic ethos where students are advocates for social justice and peace. The school has had links to the Marist Brothers and their charism since its establishment and the 5 Marist pillars of *Presence, In the Way of Mary, Love of Work, Simplicity and Family Spirit* are evident across many aspects of school life.

These core values invite the school community at John Therry to take seriously the call of ecological conversion and to live in peace with God's creation. The school takes seriously the challenge from *Laudato Si'* to care for our common home. At John Therry the school community identifies that it is crucial to take action to be sustainable stewards and responsible citizens that contribute to the building of a better future for humanity and our planet.

John Therry Catholic College within the system of schools in Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong

Since 2015 following the release of *Laudato Si'*, Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong which includes our school John Therry Catholic College 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 John Therry 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 John Therry Catholic College 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.

John Therry Catholic College and Laudato Si' Goals

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH: As a response to the cry of the earth our school has become a level 3 certified Catholic Earthcare School. John Therry Catholic College has started an environmental committee of students to address issues of biodiversity and sustainability around the school. We have performed waste audits and biodiversity audits and from there we have set up goals to reduce waste, improve recycling and increase biodiversity at the school. In 2021 we planted over 100 new local native trees and plants around the school, including koala food tree species to support local koala populations. Future initiatives include maintenance and expansion of the Indigenous gardens.

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR: John Therry Catholic College is involved in St Vincent de Paul winter appeal, Caritas Project Compassion, Marist Solidarity which raises funds and connects and shares knowledge with Vanuatu and Kiribati schools plus resources and teaching ideas also bringing home knowledge of the lifestyle and impact of climate change and rising sea levels. For our local community the school organises Christmas hampers for those less fortunate in our local area.

ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS: Staff are encouraged to make sure all lights, projectors and air conditioning is switched off at the end of day. There is also encouragement to not set air conditioners too low or too high, eg not below 20 degrees. John Therry Catholic College has days when students and staff practise gift economy values in our open day, clean up schools day outside in the community. The commerce class runs market stalls yearly to raise money for charities.

ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES:

Staff practises: John Therry Catholic College staff are encouraged to reduce printing. The school has given all staff their own personalised drink bottles and cutlery set to discourage single use plastic bottles and cutlery. The school has paper recycling containers in each classroom and staffroom. A goal is to encourage more carpooling between staff.

Student practises: The environmental committee has tried to encourage at assemblies the reduction of use of single use plastics. Future goals are to promote waste free days, vegetarian / meat free days. The plan is to speak to the canteen about the reduction of the use of straws.

ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION: John Therry Catholic College has implemented the cross curriculum priority of sustainability across all key learning areas. This means each year group for each subject has at least one unit that has a focus on sustainability. Specifically in year 7 John Therry Catholic College has a project across English, Maths, Science and Geography that looks at encouraging biodiversity within the school. We have established an ecological leadership team with our environmental club and WEN teachers. Teachers have attended Faith Ecology Network (FEN) meetings and WEN network meetings, students have attended a Youth Sustainability Conference. Our school has been successful in obtaining and implementing an environmental education grant in 2021. This project successfully established over 100 new trees on the school grounds. Our response to the cry of the poor encourages human rights, we are encouraged to reflect on as a school how Kiribati and Vanuatu human rights are affected by

climate change and rising sea waters. Teachers from our school have travelled to these areas and brought back their stories about how Kiribati and Vanuatu are impacted.

ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY: Our school has participated in spirituality days that have an ecological focus eg. Who is my neighbour. A call to ecological conversion. We will be participating later this year in Praise be: Living our ecological conversion. Religious Education programs have ecological themes embedded into them.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT: For cleanup schools day the environmental committee are going to pick up rubbish in recreational areas in the local community. Our environmental committee is hoping to spearhead environmental campaigns for students to use at school and at home. Our school has become a Koala Town School connecting us with wildlife carers to protect local koala populations.

