



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

St Paul's Albion Park Laudato Si' Action Platform Reflection 2022



Overview

St Paul's is a two stream Catholic Primary School that is located within the Parish of St Paul's in Albion Park 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 354 students.



St Paul's Albion Park was established in 1882 with three religious sisters of St Joseph sent by Mary MacKillop (St Mary of the Cross MacKillop). The school was then called St Joseph's and for some time also went under the name of St Patrick.

Today St Paul's Catholic Primary School prides itself on the charism of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Her spirit can be found in our students and staff, in their approach to learning, in their spiritual and other achievements and in their friendships and sport. Our community understands the importance of ensuring the school reflects its long tradition in the Josephite charism. Mary MacKillop's words of "Never seeing a need without doing something about it" hold particular relevance for the ways in which St Paul's responds to the environmental challenges outlined in Laudato Si'.

We are also blessed to have the patron saint of our parish school of St Paul the Apostle whose spirituality influences our daily activities and invites Christ to be gradually formed in us and in those to whom we minister. This finds an expression in the way we care for our environment. Coupled with our motto of "Constant in Faith" we understand the importance of being constant in our commitment to be sustainable stewards and responsible citizens that contribute to the building of a better future for humanity and our planet.

This School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) is a tool that will enable us to document, implement, reflect and celebrate sustainability as we respond to the challenges from Laudato Si' to walk our own journey of ecological conversion. At St Paul'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 SEM is formulated.

Environmental Vision

St Paul's 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 Paul's Contribution to the LSAP

St Paul's belongs to the system of schools in Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong. Since 2015 following the release of Laudato Si', Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong 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 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.

Accomplishments of SEMP I

From 2017 - 2020 St Paul's Albion Park engaged in the SEMP process. The following is an overview of significant environmental actions and initiatives undertaken during the first SEMP cycle.

- Develop whole school procedures outlining roles and responsibilities for the waste management system, compost, garden maintenance and management. (Updated annually)
- Incorporate an environmental duty into the Staff playground roster with procedure written.
- Environmental Committee monitors energy usage across the school with Laudato Si' award given weekly.
- Creation of sustainable bees wraps to reduce the amount of soft plastics problem throughout the school. Continue to do this once or twice or year connected to particular green dates.
- Engagement in professional development for environmental education - identifying cross curriculum links for sustainability, programming, scope and sequences.
- Whole School Recycling incorporates RED bin - general waste, YELLOW bin - paper, cardboard and plastic bottles, GREEN bin - used for composting. Whole school composting system that is managed by Year 5's Environmental Team.
- Each grade is allocated responsibility for the maintenance of one of the gardens. The Environmental Team (Year 5 students and staff) oversee and complete larger tasks, such as composting and mulching.
- Vegetable gardens (seasonal), lime, orange, plum, banana and pear trees maintained by the Environmental Team.
- Waste Free Lunches are encouraged everyday (audits, competitions, awareness and education for students and families).
- Aboriginal garden incorporates Australian Natives, edible berries and a lemon tree.
- There are three water tanks - two provide water for the toilets and the other provides water for the trees on the top oval.
- Water refill station to encourage reusable water bottles.



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

Current Actions for our School

Last year, St Paul's devised a SEMP II to be carried out from 2021 - 2024. Through this SEMP, St Paul's will be building capacity in the following areas:

- Encouraging the whole school community's ownership and responsibility in promoting and supporting the school's ecological conversion journey.
- Need for Staff to continue on their ecological conversion journey through formation in eco theology and eco spirituality addressing EEA Policy Expectation 2.4.
 - In November 2022, St Paul's staff will be engaging in professional development titled: **Praise Be. Living out Ecological Conversion**
- Whole School Engagement with the Laudato Si' Action Platform, the seven-year journey towards addressing seven Laudato Si' Goals.
- Need to ensure that learning and teaching programs reflect ecological themes and the learning across curriculum priority of sustainability. Environmental education is integrated into all stages and KLAs
- Need to reduce the School's Ecological Footprint.
- Vision and Mission Statement needs to include and/or reference sustainability principles and ecological conversion.
- School is marketed on its green credentials with an update to the School website and relevant inclusions to the Parent Information Booklet.
- A staff member of Wollongong Environment Network (WEN) that aims to support school communities respond to Laudato Si' and implement environmental stewardship and sustainability

Our SEMP Process aligns with the Laudato Si' Goals of:

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH
RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR
ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS
ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES
ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION
ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

Grants and Opportunities

2018

At St Paul's we used our grant money to begin our community garden within the school grounds. This included two large garden beds, a new garden shed, a hoselink, fertilisers and a variety of seasonal vegetables and flowers. We decided to put the garden beds into the quiet area. This is a central grassed area accessed by all staff, students and families during playtimes and special school events. Our Year 5 Environmental Team have the responsibility of being stewards for these gardens, including tasks such as weeding, composting, watering, harvesting and other general maintenance.



It is our intention to invite parents and grandparents to come and garden with us during change of season vegetable planting to share knowledge of gardening and plants. In the future, we would like to see these become functional working gardens, so we can harvest and sell seasonal vegetables in collaboration with the wider school and parish community, as we do with some of our other plants and herbs.



2020



Response and Action Our Stage 3 Environmental Team presented the new waste management procedures to our students. The team also explained the new compost procedures as we now use the FOGO kitchen caddy bins. Our Year 3 students have taken up the responsibility of the collection, washing and returning of the FOGO bins to the classroom each day. At lunch times these students assist staff to complete compost duties around the school.



2022

St Paul’s recently won a grant for the year of 2022. Here is the intended project description for ‘Scrunch it ‘n’ Bin it’:

At St Paul’s, we encourage waste-free lunches, however, we know this isn’t always the easiest option for our families. We’re noticing more and more soft plastic being thrown into our red landfill bin each day. If we can reinvigorate our waste-management systems to include soft plastic recycling, we will barely have any need for our landfill bins as most waste from the students are scrunchable food wrappers.

We hope to purchase specified white bins for the classrooms and playground, along with signage. We aim to build leadership skills within our stage 3 students to promote correct recycling practices. These leaders will be the ‘Waste-Free Warriors’. It will be their job to monitor bins, speak publicly to promote soft plastic recycling and distribute prizes for students who do this well. We hope that this initiative will build a community partnership with our local supermarket so that we can dispose of our soft plastics there.

St Paul’s is an Earthcare School

St Paul’s Albion Park is linked to the CEDoW Diocesan Values of Hope, Integrity, Compassion and Justice in line with Laudato Si’ Goals as we remain constant in faith on our ecological conversion journey.

