



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

LSAP Reflection

Catholic Education Office
Diocese of Wollongong



Overview

Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW) was established in 1952 and serves Catholic systemic school communities across the four regions of the **Illawarra, Macarthur, Southern Highlands** and **Shoalhaven**. The traditional owners of the lands upon which our Catholic schools are built are the indigenous peoples of the **Dharawal, Tharawal, Gundungurra** and **Yuin** nations. To this day, our Catholic systemic schools are greatly influenced by the life and culture of Aboriginal

CEDoW is a vibrant learning community made up of **38 Catholic systemic schools** – 29 parish primary schools, 8 secondary schools and 1 K-12 school – across the regions of the Illawarra. There are also eight independent Catholic schools administered by religious congregations within the Diocese (known as congregational schools) - seven secondary schools, and one K-12 school for students with special needs.

The leadership and strategic management of the Wollongong Catholic system of schools is the responsibility of the Director of Schools, who is in turn, responsible to the Bishop of Wollongong. The Director is accountable for the operation of the systemic schools, the management of the **Catholic Education Office (CEO)** and for providing creative leadership in the provision of resources, policy formation, strategic positioning and implementation processes in order to ensure the effectiveness of Catholic schools in the diocese. This role supports the evangelising mission of the Church in the diocese.

The Catholic Education Office Service Areas are as follows: *Directorate Services; People and Culture; Finance, Facilities, ICLT & Planning; Catholic Life, Education and Mission Services; and School Improvement Services in Primary, Secondary and Specialist Support*. Professional Officers, Education Officers, Support Teachers and Administrative Officers make up the Catholic Education Office workforce. These positions carry either office or school-based responsibility.

The Service Areas of the CEO are based across three locations – **Marian Centre** 86-88 Market Street Wollongong, **The Annexe** Wollongong and the **Emmaus Centre** Macarthur 5 Allman Street Campbelltown.

Rationale

CEDoW understands that 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. 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)

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. Since 2016 CEDoW has intentionally engaged in 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 caring for our common home.

We are inspired by the Australian Catholic Bishops’ Social Justice Statement (2021-2022) and Bishop Brian’s Diocesan Pastoral Message (October 2021)

[Social Justice Statement - Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor](#)

[Bishop Pastoral Message](#)

Key Actions of CEDoW

- Appointment of Professional Officer in 2016 to lead system response to *Laudato Si’* and the promotion of ecological conversion
- Development and implementation of an [Environmental Education Action Policy](#) for schools
- School Environment Management Plans (SEMP)
- Professional Development and Staff Formation in eco-spirituality, eco-theology and ecological conversion – Formation Days (Who Is My Neighbour? Called to Ecological Conversion and Praise Be! Living Our Ecological Conversion)
- CEDoW Environmental Education Grants Program [Environmental Education Grants](#)
- The [Wollongong Environment Network \(WEN\)](#) that aims to support school communities respond to *Laudato Si’* and implement environmental stewardship and sustainability
- Expansion of the Wollongong Environment Network (WEN) to include school student groups and Parish/Diocesan groups.
- [WEN Environment Matters Blog](#) - documenting, celebrating and sharing the ecological conversion journey of schools and system

- Creation and provision of resources and opportunities that encourage staff, students and school communities to experience eco-spirituality through prayer and liturgy
- Engagement with and celebration of Laudato Si' Week, World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and the Season of Creation
- Development of Ecological Conversion Video Resources – *Creation Corner* segment in Pray School series for K-2 and *Earth Buzz* segment in Behind The Good News [Creation Corner & Earth Buzz Videos](#)
- Development of Environmental Education and Action Diocesan Assessment Tool to assist schools review and identify areas for improvement in ecological conversion and sustainability
- Lead and support CEO, school and Diocesan engagement with the Laudato Si' Action Platform



Key Actions of CEO connected to Laudato Si' Goals

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH

- Forming Laudato Si' CEO Working Group to assist the Catholic Education office in its response to the environmental challenges of our times and the urgent call to ecological conversion outlined in the encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR

- Involvement in various social justice projects, advocacy and actions – Caritas, Project Compassion, Catholic Mission, Earthcare, St Vincent de Paul
- Vinnies Return and Earn Program

ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

- Streamlining of catering and hospitality out of Reception Services

ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

- Streamlining of catering and hospitality out of Reception Services
- Co-mingled and Paper Recycling
- Battery Recycling
- Recycling e-waste and ink toners
- Encouraging use of 'keep' cups through CEO branded cups and bottles
- Some hybrid vehicles in CEO Car Fleet



ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- Professional Development in ecological conversion
- Programs offered to schools and CEO staff

ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

- Formation, liturgy and prayer experiences

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT

- Networking and collaboration with local council and local community agencies