



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG



St Anthony's Catholic Primary School LSAP Reflection



About St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

St Anthony's Primary school is a two stream K-6 co-educational Catholic Primary school and caters for girls and boys aged from 5 to 12 years of age and has a current enrolment of 390 students.

The school is part of the Parish of St. Anthony's of Padua, Picton and is managed by the Catholic Education Office in the Diocese of Wollongong. The role of our school is to be an education agent within the Catholic Church and thus, live out our mission to extend the Kingdom of God.

St Anthony's has a long history, being established on the present site in 1880 by the Sisters' of St Joseph. Our traditions, values and beliefs are inspired by the charisma of St Mary of the Cross and the Sisters of St Joseph.

Our school community understands the importance of ensuring the school reflects its long tradition in the Josephite charism. Mary MacKillop's words of "Never see a need without doing something about it" hold particular relevance for the ways in which St Joseph's responds to the environmental challenges outlined in Laudato Si'.

St Anthony's school life operates around our motto, *Grow in Respect and Honesty* which translates to an understanding that we must respect all life and so we have a call to be respectful, honest, sustainable stewards and respectful and honest citizens that contribute to the building of a better future for humanity and our planet.

The patron saint of our parish school is St Anthony and as a contemporary of St Francis of Assisi invites us to consider the ways we care for each other, the world and our environment. We are called to a stewardship lifestyle, to be more Christ-centred and less self-centred. It involves a conversion of our heart and Laudato Si' Care for Our Common Home calls us to have an ecological conversion, a change in the way we live on this earth.

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 Anthony'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.



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About the Local Environment and Community

St Anthony's is situated on Dharawal Land at 69 Menangle St, Picton. Picton is a small picturesque town in the Macarthur Region of New South Wales, in the Wollondilly Shire. It is located 80km south-west of Sydney. Rich in fine heritage architecture, Picton also has many cafes, arts and craft shops.

The school shares the same site as the Picton Parish Church and is positioned centrally within the township, near to the Picton Mall. The Picton township is near to the Hume Highway and the growth areas of Wilton and surrounds. There are sites of Aboriginal and historical significance in our local area such as Thirlmere Lakes and Razorback Mountain.

Our school draws from a wide range of socio economic groups from varied cultural backgrounds with farming, semi rural and suburban home settings.

In 2016 the school was severely affected by the flooding of the Picton township which resulted in the school requiring massive rebuilding and renovation. This necessitated the removal of a number of mature growth trees and rejuvenation of the existing Aboriginal, Reflection and Vegetable gardens.

St Anthony's has four main playgrounds which include: a large, open grassed area, a small quiet play area, a COLA, the Infants play area that includes a large artificial turf space, grass area sandpit and shaded asphalt play space. The outdoor learning space includes the Aboriginal garden.

There are limited trees shading the Primary playground. There are two vegetable gardens and a natural fence of a variety of fruit trees (fig, mulberry, nectarine, peach, apple, pear, lemon, orange, mandarin) planted to restrict foot traffic across a grassed area entry. There are composting and recycling areas.

The school has a Hall that is also utilised daily by a CatholicCare OOSH.

Belonging to the Catholic Education Diocese 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)



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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 Anthony's has implemented and engaged in an Environmental Education Action Policy. The Wollongong Environment Network (WEN) Contact is Nicole Newton, who works with the Religious Education Coordinator (REC), as well as staff and students to plan and implement this policy by using a **School Environment Management Plan (SEMP)**. In my role as the WEN contact I have worked with Beth Riolo from the Catholic Education Office to create a SEMP for a three year period. We are about to create our second SEMP and were successful in many of our School's goals in the SEMP 1 Process during 2018 to 2021.

The overall mission of CEDoW is articulated in *Lighting the Way Vision and Strategic Direction 2019-2022*. This SEMP connects directly with: Mission Dimension 1, **Mission and Catholicity**

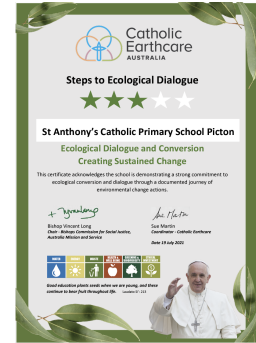
- **Vision 1.7** *Ecological conversion and sustainability are witnessed in the day-to-day life of the educating community*
- **Realising the Vision** - *Implement the Diocesan Environmental Education and Action Policy to demonstrate fidelity to Laudato Si'*
- St Anthony's is involved in the Catholic Education Office 'School Review and Improvement' process, as are all schools in the Wollongong diocese. Through this we review all aspects of school life, seeking to make improvements in all areas to the betterment of our students. This ongoing improvement continues, especially in the area of sustainability.
- This plan connects to whole school planning through the following:
 - The school's SRI plan
 - Part of the school annual plan
 - Reported on in the school annual report
 - Integrated with curriculum programs
 - Links to extra-curricular activities for students
- St Anthony's has been fortunate enough to receive a CEDoW Environmental Education Grant in 2021. The grant was utilised for the streamlining of Waste Management - four coloured bins (GREEN - organic, RED - landfill, YELLOW - mixed recycling and BLUE - paper recycling) throughout the school.
- St Anthony's has a member of Wollongong Environment Network (WEN). WEN aims to support school communities to respond to Laudato Si' and implement environmental stewardship and sustainability. 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. This is part of my Professional Development throughout the year. Our school also participates in Spirituality Days and Environment Days, such as Clean Up Australia Day and World Environment Day. I also pass this information onto staff and students through speaking on Assembly and Staff Meetings



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and of course by leading by example. In many cases, staff and students have taken up practices in their homes that they otherwise would not have done.

- St Anthony's is a Level 3 Certification Earthcare School. This certificate acknowledges that our school is demonstrating a strong commitment to ecological conversion and dialogue through a documented journey of environmental change actions. This is a wonderful acknowledgement of the many environmental actions that we engage in at our school and it inspires us all to continue doing what we can to care for our common home.



- The Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement 2021-22: *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, affirms that “we human beings need a change of heart, mind, and behaviour”. It exhorts us all to care for creation and the most vulnerable people in our worldwide human family. St Anthony's participates in many activities to affirm our connection to the Social Justice Statement 2021-22: *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Our school has a Spirituality Leadership Group and an Environment Leadership Group that are often the drivers of days like Clean Up Australia Day, Vinnies Appeal, Project Compassion, Vinnies Return and Earn Bins, Earth Hour, and World Day of Prayer for Creation. Between myself as the WEN Contact, the REC and classroom teachers, we participate in many activities around the school such as liturgies, use recycled paper in the print room, and sustainability across KLA's.

In CEDoW's [Environmental Education Policy](#) (released in 2018) there are expectations that all systemic schools are required to address. A key expectation involves planning.

1.4 develop a School Environment Management Plan (SEMP) that:

1.4.1 is informed by the six areas of the ASSISI Framework: Whole School Planning; Religious Dimension; Learning and Teaching; Ethical Resource Use; Caring for Country; and Community Relationships

1.4.2 includes actions that are informed by the CEDoW Environmental Assessment Tool

1.4.3 is reviewed and updated on a 3-year cycle

The following is an overview of significant environmental actions and initiatives undertaken during the first SEMP cycle:

- Year 6 Environment Group - meets regularly. Students nominate participation in various leadership roles and this is one of the leadership groups. Responsible for watering, weeding, collecting Crunch and Sip scraps, mulching, checking compost, maintaining the worm farms, collect waste paper recycling and brainstorming ideas for future environmental projects.
- Waste management includes: General Waste, Paper and cardboard and Organic waste (In classrooms and playground). There is also Return & Earn (Playground). Canteen, Library and Administration areas have recycling that includes paper and cardboard. Staffroom has recycling that includes organic waste, paper/ cardboard, plastic and coffee cups.
- “Crunch and Sip” happens across the whole school with the green waste collected daily and



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the compost is managed by Year 6.

- Two vegetable garden plots have a range of herbs, leafy greens, a lemon tree, tomatoes, kiwi fruit vines, beans and peas, flowering annuals, cucumbers, lettuces, eggplants, broccoli and bok choy. The gardens are currently maintained by Year 6 students and the WEN Contact.
- Previous participation in Schools Plant a Tree Day, National Recycling Week and Mobile Phone Muster. Environmental activities and events are promoted across the school via the WEN Contact. Whole School liturgies have included World Environment Day and World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.
- Year 6 Spirituality Group had a visit to the Vinnies Shop to learn more about the “Return and Earn” recycling program. Year 4 visited the Wollongong Botanical Gardens exploring Aboriginal perspectives and environmental management. Year 3 students have visited the Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living learning about composting, worm farming and other environmental activities.
- Students have participated in a threatened species art and creative writing competition run through the local Wollondilly Council. Students have also participated in nature photography experiences including an exhibition.
- The canteen has a reusable lunch order bag (sticky beak). There have been some hygiene issues which need to be addressed.
- The Aboriginal Garden is a space that has local native plants that promote plant and animal biodiversity. There is a yarnning circle that provides the opportunity for outdoor learning.
- Sustainability is evident in some teaching programs, mainly in RE and Science KLAs.
- Staff formation in Laudato Si’, eco-theology and spirituality (Who is my Neighbour? Called to Ecological Conversion).

Laudato Si’ Action Platform

The Laudato Si’ Action Platform empowers the universal Church and all people of good will to respond to [Laudato Si’](#), Pope Francis’ encyclical on caring for our common home. St Anthony’s has this in the forefront of a school whose motto is “Grow in Respect and Honesty”. Our mission aims to engage our students with contemporary social justice issues so they willingly commit to a hope filled future. We work to recognise and affirm the dignity of each individual in an environment of deep mutual respect for themselves, others and the world around us.

1. Response to the **Cry of the Earth**: efforts to protect and promote biodiversity

using water tanks to water the garden, solar power that powers our air conditioning, reducing fossil fuels in order to achieve carbon neutrality, , guaranteeing access to clean water for all, etc.

2. Response to the **Cry of the Poor**: fundraising for charities, with special attention to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, Vinnies Appeal at Christmas time and soup/can appeal during winter for example.



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3. Ecological **Economics**: ethical consumption on things we purchase to run the school such as recycled paper, certified companies that use ethical practices, staff are encouraged to make sure all lights, fans and air conditioners are switched off at break times and at the end of the day in classrooms and meeting spaces.
4. Adoption of **Simple Lifestyles**: minimising the use of resources and energy throughout the school, avoiding single-use plastic in the staff room and the canteen as well as for functions, using online learning platforms instead of paper, bringing drink bottles to school and nude food. The school has introduced printing limitations and encourages the reusing of scrap paper.
5. Ecological **Education**: the school is working towards embedding sustainability across the curriculum and creating a scope and sequence to outline current teaching and learning programs that have a sustainability link. This not only happens in the classroom but also on assemblies and through initiatives and celebrating days like World Environment Day.
6. Ecological **Spirituality**: St Anthony's ecological spirituality journey is present in our school through the study of religious education, liturgical celebrations throughout the year such as the World Day of Creation for Creation, develop ecological catechesis in the Environmental Leadership Group and throughout daily prayer, and annual Staff Spirituality Day.
7. Emphasis on **Community involvement and participatory** action to care for creation at the local, regional, national and international levels, promoting advocacy and people's campaigns.