



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG



Caring for Our Common Home

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Helensburgh



Laudato Si' Action Platform Reflection 2022

Overview

Holy Cross is a contemporary single stream Catholic Primary School that is located within the Parish of Helensburgh 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 171 students.

At Holy Cross students are challenged to thrive in a rich learning environment where the focus is on constant improvement. A culture of reflective action is promoted. Holy Cross is a future focused community with a view to further enable quality teaching and learning that embraces digital pedagogy.

The school was founded in 1900 by the sisters of St Joseph, whose charism remains the cornerstone of our school's Catholic identity. St Mary of the Cross MacKillop's 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.

The Holy Cross 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 Holy Cross responds to the environmental challenges outlined in Laudato Si'. This finds an expression in the way we care for our environment. Coupled with our motto of "Learning to Learn, Live and Love" we understand the importance of learning 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 Holy Cross 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.

- [SEMP HELENSBURGH Updated 9.11.2020/Updated: 15/11/2021](#)

Environmental Vision

Holy Cross 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.

Holy Cross' Contribution to the LSAP

Holy Cross Helensburgh Catholic Primary school 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.

Overview of SEMP Actions and Environmental Education Achievements

Environmental Education Achievements

At Holy Cross, we have been engaged in various environmental actions and initiatives. The following is an outline of past environmental action:

- Whole School Waste Management is RED Bin - general waste, YELLOW Bin - co-mingled and Vinnies Return and Earn.
- Develop whole school procedures outlining roles and responsibilities for the waste management system, compost, garden maintenance and management. This is reviewed and updated annually on a needs basis.

- Maintenance of gardens - Gardening Club incorporating students from K-6 at lunchtime. Each term a Class is allocated the Environmental Education Officer (Ecologist provided and funded by Peabody Mines) and SSO (Sue Murray). This includes targeted Environmental Education for two classes per term which involves a planning day, program and evaluation with class teachers, the Ecologist and the SSO (garden coordinator)
- Vegetable gardens (seasonal) and flowers for pollination. Lemons, oranges and mandarins, maintained by the Gardening Club.
- Participation in Clean Up Australia Day, National Tree Day, World Environment Day and Earth Hour.
- Regular environmental liturgies that connect into significant “green dates” are planned for and celebrated.
- Yalunga garden in the quiet area incorporating Australian Natives, edible berries and other bush tucker.
- Establishment of a new Bush Tucker garden with a whole school liturgy focusing on National Tree Day where the CEO Director Mr Peter Hill was invited to be part of the planting ceremony.
- There is one water tank - provides water for gardens.
- Daily Crunch and Sip -waste free snacks
- Waste Audit
- Introduction of Trash Free Lunches on a Tuesday known as Trash Free Tuesday.
- Environmental Trophy given to the Class of the Week for best environmental practices or best Trash Free Lunches results.
- Environment Certificates given to students displaying Environmental Stewardship across the KLA's in line with Pope Francis' Laudato Si'.
- Water refill tap to encourage reusable water bottles.
- *Who Gives a Crap* Toilet Paper
- Have applied for Environmental grants - garden beds, plants, garden equipment
 - [Holy Cross Application](#)
 - [2021 Enviro Grant Ideas](#)
 - [Holy Cross Helensburgh Environmental Grant Evaluation 2021](#)
- Staff formation in Laudato Si', eco-theology and spirituality (Who is my Neighbour? Called to Ecological Conversion).
- Staff engagement in professional development for environmental education - identifying cross curriculum links for sustainability, programming, scope and sequences.
- Staff taking ownership and responsibility to celebrate environmental themed days by preparing and presenting class/stage lead liturgies to whole school assemblies.

WEN Contacts

- Two Holy Cross staff are members of Wollongong Environment Network (WEN) who work collaboratively to support school communities, respond to Laudato Si' and implement environmental stewardship and sustainability.
- Each year, the WEN contact/s from each school around the Wollongong diocese meet so we have a chance to network, share ideas and environmental actions as well as initiatives.
- In 2021, we saw the *expansion of Teacher Wollongong Environment Network (WEN) to include a Primary Student WEN that supports the WEN Teacher Contact in "caring for our common home" at each school.*

Primary Student WEN Day

In 2021 The inaugural Primary Student WEN Day was held. 4 Students were commissioned into the WEN.

The purpose of the Primary Student WEN Day was to:

- *Help young people connect their ecological, social justice actions and prayer within the context of their relationship with God and community.*
- *Provide formation for students, giving them strategies and building their own capacity so that they can be leaders of ecological actions in their schools.*

The theme of the Primary Student WEN Day was *Caring for Our Common Home – A Call to Action!* This event was a day of inspiration, sharing and collaboration for both students and their teachers. The day was a springboard for continued strong engagement and involvement for ecological conversion and environmental action within our schools.

Formation of the Primary Student WEN Committee

- At Holy Cross we due to overwhelming response from our Year 5 students to be part of the Student Wen team decided not to limit our primary WEN student to the standard of 4 students. Rather we embarked on the formation of a Student Wen Committee to support the Laudato Si' by promoting and monitoring the school's environmental practices.

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

Current Actions for our School

Implementing items purchased with our grant money into our current environmental practices.

At Holy Cross we used our Grant money to purchase items that would further promote our green initiatives and encourage new growth in our ecological stewardship amongst the students and staff.

Waste Free Lunches

- At Holy Cross we encourage waste-free lunches, however, we know this isn't always the easiest option for our families and for our canteen. Since some of our Waste Management plans were put on hold due to Covid 19 we have more and more soft plastic being thrown into our red landfill bin each day. We are now aiming to reinvigorate our waste-management systems to include soft plastic recycling. We will also be encouraging our students and their families, staff and our canteen to reduce the waste usage by having waste free lunches, recyclable/reusable containers and hopefully reducing the need for our landfill bins.
- We aim to increase our trash free lunch days. We started with Trash Free Tuesdays, progressed

to Waste Free Wednesday with a view to trash free lunches being a daily occurrence and part of our everyday school routines. To further encourage waste free lunches our WEN students will continue to conduct audits, competitions, awareness and education for students and families.

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- Our Holy Cross parents were keen to purchase the Reusable Lunch Order bags (Sticky Beaks) that we purchased with some of our grant money. The Canteen supervisor has welcomed their use with the lunch orders that are purchased on a regular basis. This has added to the waste reduction.
- Funds raised from purchases will be put back into purchasing additional Sticky Beak Lunch order bags to be sold at the next Kindergarten orientation. A practice that we believe is encouraging the next lot of our parents and students to be proactive in the War on Waste.

Crunch and Sip

- We plan to reintroduce Crunch and Sip waste white bins for the classrooms and playground, along with signage. In true environmental spirit we will not be purchasing these bins, rather they will be large ice-cream containers with lids collected from local cafes/homes.

WEN STUDENT COMMITTEE also known as our Waste Warriors

- We aim to build leadership skills within our Stage 3 WEN students to promote environmental stewardship across our school. These leaders will also be known as 'Waste-Free Warriors'. Their role will include promoting the correct recycling practices and introducing our new Blue bins for soft plastics to be recycled. Our WEN students will also be encouraged to monitor the waste free lunches, conduct waste audits and promote green dates.
- It will be their job to monitor Waste free lunches and encourage classes to place food scraps into the newly purchased Subpods for composting. They will be encouraged to scout which class will receive the Environmental Trophy for Class of the Week.
- The WEN students will also monitor bins for correct usage, speak publicly to promote soft plastic recycling and distribute prizes for students who do this well. They will also be encouraged to nominate students who may be eligible for the Environmental Awards given out at the whole school assemblies. We hope that with the support of the WEN students that these initiatives will build a community partnership with our local supermarket so that we can dispose of our soft plastics there.

A major action for Holy Cross is to reinvigorate environmental initiatives and systems that were in place prior to COVID-19.

- This year we will strive to incorporate an environmental duty into the Staff playground roster with procedures written. We are quite aware that a lot of our previously employed systems were put on hold over the past few years due to Covid 19, however we wish to reinvigorate and re-energise the enthusiasm for our best environmental practices to be well and truly embedded and sustainable into our school environment once again. This will once again encourage the whole school community's ownership and responsibility in promoting and supporting the school's ecological conversion journey.

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Holy Cross School Vision and Mission to be an Earthcare School.

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School Helensburgh is proud to be 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.

This is further nurtured, supported and linked to our [Holy Cross School Vision, Mission and Values Statement](#).

OUR VISION: Learning to Learn, Live and Love

OUR MISSION

In the Josephite Spirit we are:

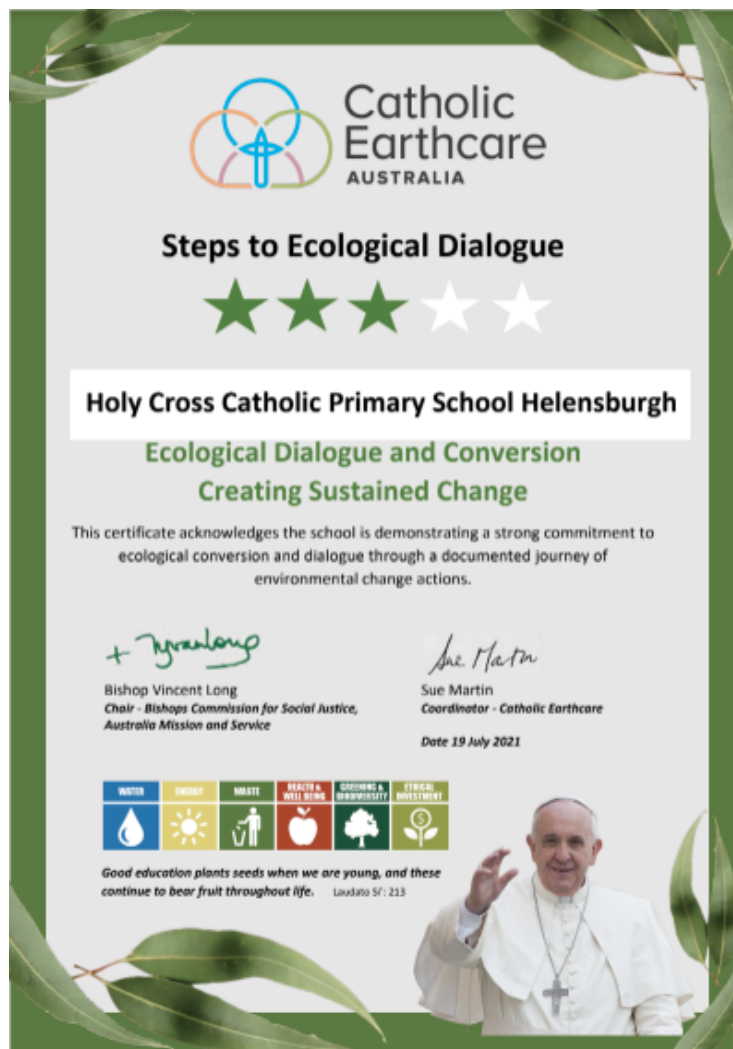
- Learning to Learn by engaging in authentic learning experiences to build capacity and improve performance;
- Learning to Live by embracing life through right relationships with God, others, self and earth;
- Learning to Love by valuing and sharing our diversity through love, service and stewardship.

OUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

- At Holy Cross we would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of this land, the Dharawal people. We acknowledge this living culture and its unique role in the life of Australia today.

Catholic Earthcare Australia wants to acknowledge the good works happening in schools and nurture their development, growing abundance in addressing our ecological challenges so that we can lead by example and follow our well-formed hearts with practical steps which engage the whole community in caring for our mother earth.

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School's dedication and hard work to ecological stewardship has been acknowledged. We have now been recognised as Level 3 Certified Earthcare School. This certification was awarded in 2021.



Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement

- Inspired by Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement – Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor and Bishop Brian's Diocesan Pastoral Message, Holy Cross has used the following two documents to guide our journey towards ecological conversion.
- [Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor](#)
- [Bishop Brian's Mascord 2021 Diocesan Pastoral Message](#)
- [Bishop Brian Mascord 2021 - Laudato Si' Action Platform.pdf](#)

- [Holy Cross Catholic Primary School Website- Environmental Links](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND EDUCATION

Our school community understands the importance of Mary MacKillop's words, "Never see a need without doing something about it." These words hold particular relevance for the ways in which Holy Cross responds to the environmental challenges outlined in Pope Francis' 'Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home'.

Holy Cross is committed to being [sustainable stewards](#) and responsible citizens that contribute to the building of a better future for humanity and our planet. We are called to be God's stewards which means managing responsibly the God-given resources we have – our time, our talent, our resources and our treasure.



A stewardship lifestyle enhances the relationships we have with God and with one another. Being God's steward means trying to live out a commitment to be more Christ-centred and less self-centred. It involves a conversion of our heart – Laudato Si' calls us to have an ecological conversion, a change in the way we live on this earth.

At Holy Cross, we provide programs and practices that [care for our common home](#), embedded within the school community a commitment to ecologically sustainable actions that promote and nurture ecological conversion.

The Holy Cross School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) is a tool that enables us to document, implement, reflect and celebrate this commitment as we respond to the challenges from Laudato Si' to walk our own journey of ecological conversion.

A significant aspect of our commitment to being sustainable stewards and responsible citizens is our famous Holy Cross Gardening Club. Our Gardening Club is sponsored by Peabody mines who fund our resident Ecologist and Environmental Education Officer and specialist School Support Officer, who facilitate targeted environmental education lessons in one class each week. Additionally, they teach and guide our students to maintain our well established garden consisting of native plants, fruits and vegetables during lunchtimes each Thursday.

[Read more about how we care for the environment at Holy Cross](#)