



**Sacred Heart
College**
GEELONG

Laudato Si Action Platform reflection 2022

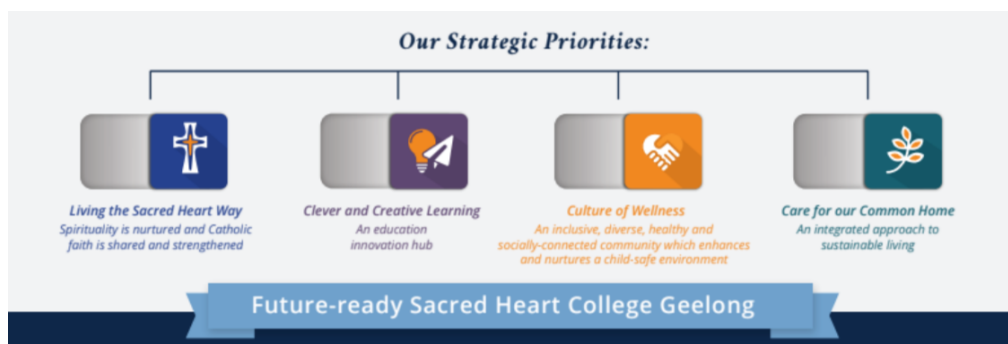
Sacred Heart College is a faith-centered Catholic secondary school inspired and conducted in the Mercy tradition since 1860. Our heritage provides a sound foundation from which our school continues to develop and grow. Our Mercy tradition was born out of Catherine McAuley's quest to address injustice and to empower others through an education that best reflected the signs of the time. For this reason, Sacred Heart College strives to honor our traditions and heritage, while maintaining a progressive approach to education.

The Mercy sisters are both an inspiration and firm foundation from which we grow. We therefore believe that we stand on the shoulders of giants, giants of compassion and mercy, who hold us up and drive us forward. We aim to provide students with an education that equips them to be a voice for justice, agents of change and a credit to the Sisters of Mercy.

Following in the example of the Mercy sisters, Sacred Heart College is called to respond to the cry of earth and the cry of the poor. We believe that the needs of humanity are not separable from the needs of the earth. We therefore see that authentic and meaningful social justice is also earth justice. We endeavor to reflect and act on the Sisters of Mercy Chapter Statement, *"At this time of global vulnerability God's transforming mercy fires our hearts anew with deeper reverence for all creation. Disturbed by the despair and suffering of many peoples and the degradation of Earth, we are impelled to reflective action for gospel justice" - The Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG) .*

As such, Sacred Heart College embraces the challenge issued by Pope Francis in his encyclical Laudato Si and his call to Care for our Common Home. We believe that as stewards of the earth, we are championed to protect our common home and all who dwell within it. We aim to bring humanity together to seek a sustainable way forward for future generations to come. We are acutely aware of the ecological crisis that our earth is currently experiencing and our desire for change is our motivation for sustained and effective action. *“We received this world as an inheritance from past generations, but also as a loan from future generations, to whom we will have to return it” - Pope Francis, 2015.*

Our College Strategic Plan, Strategy 2021 and beyond, acknowledges that we are living in a new, fast moving and disrupted world. It will enable us to continue to embrace our collective inner strength, our unapologetic perseverance, our unwavering determination and our relentless courage. A central priority to our Strategy 2021 and beyond is Care for our Common Home. As a College we are committed to the Laudato Si’ Action Platform and developing our 7 year goals.



Sacred Heart College is committed to actioning the goals of Laudato Si through engaged focus in our membership of the Laudato Si Action Platform, the Catholic EarthCare Schools Program and ResourceSmart Schools Program.

Through a wide range of sustainability initiatives, and with education, dialogue and action at the forefront of learning, students play their part in shaping attitudes and awareness within the College community. Their response to the issue of sustainability then has the potential to influence all beyond the sphere of their community alone. Sacred Heart College aims to provide students with a wide lens through which to observe and interact with the call of our earth. In doing so we aim to respond to global, national and local issues, as well as long- and short-term needs. We encourage collaborative work ethic where individuals share their talents, time and contributions to seek lasting and meaningful solutions to real life concerns.

We also acknowledge that the demands of our earth today will differ in the future and so endeavor to reflect regularly and respond reflexively to the cry of earth. In doing so our current initiatives include:

The Cry of Earth:

- Involvement in the ResourceSmart Schools Program.
- Involvement in the Catholic Earthcare Program.
- Involvement in the Laudato si Action Platform.
- The introduction of Mercy and Mission Leaders with specific expectations and requirements around sustainability and environmental initiatives.
- Installment of water tanks.
- Collection of food scraps and composting organic materials
- Energy saving posters/cards that act as reminders to staff and students to reduce electricity usage (e.g. turn off light switches, heaters, etc.)
- The implementation of automatic timers on lights.
- Water saving reminders and awareness posters (predominantly digital to reduce paper waste).
- Addition of screens that allow for information to effectively disseminated to staff and students without the use of paper.
- Conscientious landscaping providing additional trees and plants.
- The development of our Reconciliation Garden and gathering space.

The Cry of the Poor:

- Support of the Caritas Project Compassion Appeal.
- Support of the St Vincent and Catholic Care annual Christmas Appeal.
- House based Mercy Works, supporting 8 social justice causes covering local, national and international issues. Our Mercy Works raise awareness, create action and fundraise for various organizations.
- The year 12 Mercy in Action Project, that sees students develop and act on projects of mercy within our community.
- The year 12 Mercy Work which supports the efforts of Offspring.
- SHC based Outreach Opportunities such as:
 - Tutoring provided to disadvantaged primary students.
 - Play inspired initiatives to support young children back into schooling after extended absence.
 - Cemetery visits that honor and pay tribute to the Mercy Sisters.

- Volunteering at Café Lite which supports community connectedness and supports potentially isolated members of the community.
- PHNA Heart Ministry which provides physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual warmth, comfort and support to those struggling within our community.
- Self-initiated Outreach Opportunities such as:
 - St Vincent De Paul Op Shops.
 - Tutoring Programs.
 - Rotary Book Fair.
 - Clairvaux Carnival.
 - Community Events
 - Support as significant masses and events.
 - Environmental projects and events run within our community such as those arranged by the *Friends of the Waurm Ponds Creek*.
- Group Food Drives and pantry restocking for local families struggling and in need.
- Hampers and food deliveries for local families who are experiencing illness, grief and financial hardship.
- Spring Sleep Out that supports Lazarus House.
- The development and distribution of Inclusion and Diversity Scholarships.
- The development of a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Ecological Economics:

- Installation of solar panels and data panels.
- Instillation of water tanks.
- Reduction in photocopying/teachers minimize paper use by posting materials on online/Canvas.
- Recycling Bins.
- Use of sustainably sourced cutlery and food packaging.
- Sustainability in the canteen.
- Installation of drink taps with garden beneath to utilize lost water.
- Installation of blinds, modern designs in heating and cooling.

Adopting Sustainable Lifestyles:

- Reduction of waste and recycling of materials.
- We have employed a dedicated printer who has dramatically and effectively reduced paper waste across the school.
- Care for Common Home
- Participation in Ride to School Day.

- Promotion and participation in Earth Hour, Earth Day, National Sustainability Week, and others.

Ecological Education:

- The development of Religious Education Units that further educate and empower our students to be agents for change. For example, Big Issues, Care for our Common Home (Coast Guardians), From Where We Come, Religion through the Eyes of Art, and various others.
- Immersion programs which incorporate an understanding of holistic justice (recognising the integral link between caring for humanity and the environment).
- Environmental Science units.

Ecological Spirituality:

- Staff Professional Learning such as the Seasons of Creation Term 3 PD.
- The Season of Creation teaching resources, events and activities.
- Staff Retreats - Santa Casa, Botanical Gardens
- The implementation and further development of our Circle of Mercy Professional Learning events.

Community Resilience and Empowerment:

- Outreach participation at Clean up Australia Day as well as other community events.
- Promoting Sustainability and significant environmentally focused days within our community.
- Mercy and Mission Leadership Team.
- Empowering Women's Dinner.

Future Priorities:

- The future acquisition of grants such as the City of Greater Geelong Community Grant obtained for the development of the Reconciliation Garden and Gathering Space.
- Further development of the Mercy and Mission student leaders focus on sustainability and environmental initiatives.