Sacred Heart College
GEELONG

Laudato Si' Action Plan 2026 and Beyond

This plan reflects our community's commitment to follow 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 our Earth. We therefore see that authentic and meaningful social justice is also Earth justice. We endeavour to reflect and act on the 2017 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) .*

Our College Strategic Plan 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 pillar to our Strategy is Care for our Common Home.

As such, 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, and the Catholic EarthCare Schools Program.

Our school will celebrate progress by:

- Reporting progress in the annual school Social Justice Report.
- Regular updates in the school newsletter, school website and social media pages, student, staff and family bulletins and in school announcements.
- Relevant displays and events at locations inside the school.
- Student Awards and acknowledgement for environmental action.
- Promoted at school assemblies and shared through our student leadership programs.
- Grants and competitions applied for.
- Sharing the skills, positives and challenges of our school's journey with other schools.
- Including school wide participation and support of our Laudato Si' goals and our resolute and impassioned membership of the Laudato Si' Action Platform, and the Catholic EarthCare Schools Program.

Focus Area Goals (ASSISI Framework) - A Strategic, Systems-based, Integrated Sustainability Initiative

1. **Whole School Planning**
   Sacred Heart College is committed to actioning a school-wide culture of sustainability and a commitment to care for our common home. We aim to achieve this through our Laudato Si goals and our resolute and impassioned membership of the Laudato Si Action Platform, and the Catholic EarthCare Schools Program. In addition, we intend to witness this plan through our Mercy Governance, application of Policy, and our Mercy and Mission Team.
2. **Religious Dimension**
   Catholic Social Teaching, Celebration of significant events such as Season of Creation, World Environment Day, etc., Liturgy, Prayer, Embedding of eco-theology and Catholic Social Teaching principles in RE Curriculum, Formation in eco-spirituality & theology.
3. **Teaching & Learning**
   Curriculum, Syllabus Perspectives & Materials, Professional Development, Environmental education integrated into all stages and subject areas, Scope & Sequences for environmental education, Curriculum links to environmental action in school.
4. **Ethical Resource Use**
   Individual and School Ecological Footprints, Administrative Practices, Waste Management – recycling, Green catering, purchasing, Audits
5. **Caring for Country**
   Physical surrounds & Maintenance, Biodiversity - Grounds developed to enhance environmental education – e.g. 'Outdoor Living Classroom', outdoor education, Landscaping (equipment, shade, safety and seating reflect an awareness and consideration of environmental impact).
6. **Community Relationships**
   Networks and Partnerships, Student Life.

Laudato Si' in Action:

Whole-school achievements and next steps across the seven Laudato Si' Goals.

In 2026 Sacred Heart College completed the Caritas Australia Catholic Earthcare School Self-Assessment as part of its Laudato Si' Action Planning process. The self-assessment considers how the College's people, place and practice respond to the seven Laudato Si' Goals, and complements the curriculum mapping in this report by capturing the whole-school social justice, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and sustainability initiatives that support student learning.

Focus Area (Laudato Si' Goals)

The following goals are a combination of what is already being achieved at Sacred Heart College, and what is being planned for in both the near and distant future. Many projects are both current and long-term goals as many of the projects and ideas that we wish to implement have stages of development to ensure they are realised in an authentic and sustainable manner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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

GOAL 1 RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH *A call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and ecological sustainability.*	
FOCUS AREA	**CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS 2026**

Energy efficiency	• Motion sensors and/or automatic timers on lights, LED lighting where possible • 4.5 star+ energy-efficient heating in all new builds, most efficient options in the heritage precinct • 10kW solar panels (NSSP and VSSP grants), blinds and modern heating/cooling designs • Computers and digital equipment set to sleep mode, energy-saving reminder posters/cards
Conserving and reusing water	• Water tanks installed, drink taps with a garden beneath to use lost water • Digital water-saving awareness posters, Food classes reuse handwashing water to rinse dishes • AI Water usage and awareness campaign by the AMSSA students
Caring for our grounds	• Drought-tolerant trees and plants, plantings for birds and pollinators, mulch and compost • Food scraps collected and composted, seedlings bought through a local charity • Reconciliation Garden and gathering space, lunchtime 'Gardening Time' • National Tree Planting Day
Monitoring, education and advocacy	• Members of the Laudato Si' Action Platform and Catholic Earthcare Schools Program • Care for our Common Home, Environmental Science and Sacred Ecology (Rainforest to Reef) units offered as part of our curriculum • Bellarine Catchment Network - Dell in Clifton Springs and Murrk Ngubitj Yarram Yaluk in Wallington - beach combs, water testing, weeding, planting and erosion protection initiatives. • Mercy and Mission Leaders hold sustainability responsibilities • Year 11 VM RE class food insecurity unit, Year 11 charity volunteer work at Feed Me Geelong packaging and cooking food
Environmentally friendly materials	• Digital screens and newsletter reduce paper, materials posted on Canvas, print manager • Design Futures Lab develops bio-materials (e.g. 3D-printed spent coffee grounds) and reusable materials for art projects, 40,000 expired COVID masks that could not be donated were painted and used as an art installation • Creation of new fashion materials from donated Oroton leather goods • Op Shop donated clothing on sale, with unsold clothing shredded and used as stuffing for toy making at Christmas as part of the Joy Project
Opportunities to improve	• Planned: nesting boxes, insect hotels, vegetable garden/fruit trees, VSGA garden grants • Annual Biodiversity Audit (Habitat Quality Assessment Score) • Review heating/cooling in the heritage precinct and the efficiency of all cooling units • Set guidelines so fundraising is environmentally friendly (no/minimal plastic or single-use), including a shift away from posters to advertise fundraisers • Create waste signage and change the bin program so bins are clear and waste is composted, working with cleaning and maintenance staff and the STEM program, which is creating garden boxes for the Tiny Home Project

GOAL 2 RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR

A call to promote eco-justice, aware that people most vulnerable to poverty are affected most by climate change, and that we can change this by better caring for each other and our common home.

FOCUS AREA	CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS 2026

Connection with First Nations people	• Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in development, Reconciliation Garden • Year 8 Faith Day with the Wathaurong Co-operative: Smoking Ceremony and yarning circles • Kakadu First Nations Immersion, partnership with Middle Point Primary School (NT) since 2023 • Mandingalbay Yidinji people host the Sacred Ecology immersion, Moon Sick Pads service program • Mercy Works: Indigenous Projects – Cape York Girl Academy
Supporting organisations – local and global	• Caritas Project Compassion, House-based Mercy Works supporting 8 justice causes • St Vincent de Paul, Bay Leaf and Catholic Care Christmas Appeal, Lazarus Community Centre • Year 9 Community Project: MacKillop Family Services, St Thomas Aquinas PS, Lazarus • Year 12 Mercy Work: Offspring (women rescued from human trafficking in Kolkata) • Timor-Leste: CTIT partner school and Venilale orphanage, Café Light supports Viqueque • Year 11 Feed Me Geelong, aged care facilities, Rice Village and Mecwacare visits, with craft, story and physical activities with elderly people • Year 8 visits to aged care, Year 10 IGEN Mercy Health Rice Village visits
Supporting school and parish families in need	• SHC Christmas hampers, Caring Kitchens meals, food drives and pantry restocking • Hampers and meals for families facing illness, grief or financial hardship • Inclusion and Diversity Scholarships, 100% equity sponsorship for immersions, second-hand uniforms • Tutoring disadvantaged primary students through the St Thomas Aquinas Wexford program, PHNA Heart Ministry
Slavery, ethical supply and advocacy	• Human trafficking studied in Big Issues and Year 12 RE, fast fashion in RE, and Fashion Design • 'Houses at Parliament' campaign: 2,655 paper houses calling for more public housing • Winter/Spring Sleep Out for Lazarus House, foster-carer letter-drop advocacy • Big Issues topics include racial inequality, homelessness, displacement and reconciliation
Opportunities to improve	• Audit supply chains to ensure they are slavery-free (e.g. Fair Trade coffee, tea and chocolate sold in the College café) • Confirm school uniforms and sporting equipment are ethically made, Year 12 uniform Op Shop • Complete and publish the Reconciliation Action Plan for 2027 • Tiny Home Project: Tiny Home built onsite with the Design Futures Lab in partnership with Surf Coast Tiny Homes over 1–2 years (trailer, flooring and build started in 2026)

GOAL 3 ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

Acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, embedded within the biosphere, and considers how countering consumerism and throwaway culture can lead to sustainability, equity and justice.

FOCUS AREA	CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS 2026
Renewable energy	• 10kW solar and data panels installed (NSSP and VSSP grants)

Responsible purchasing and resource use	• Sustainably sourced cutlery and food packaging, sustainability in the canteen • Ethical Resource Use focus area: green catering, purchasing, ecological footprints and audits • Environmentally friendly photocopying, a print manager and a dedicated printer cut paper waste • Digital staff and community newsletter, teaching materials posted online via Canvas
Sharing goods and second-hand use	• Parent access to second-hand uniforms and Op Shop • Students volunteer at St Vincent de Paul Op Shops and the Rotary Book Fair • Fashion Design students repurpose donated Oroton apparel, Year 7 Joy Project uses recycled materials • Food classes raised money for St Bernard's parish through the Clairvaux Book Stall • Students raised money from donated clothes at the SHC markets Op Shop, unsold clothing will be repurposed as stuffing for homemade toys donated at Christmas • Oroton leather partnership: donated handbags repurposed into new designs, leather tags and fashion, sold for Mercy Works • Year 12 student uniform donations
Local suppliers	• Seedlings purchased through local charity opportunities • Food classes consider seasonal produce and ethical, responsible sourcing of ingredients
Learning about ecological economics	• Business Management: corporate social responsibility, supply chains and green marketing • Care for our Common Home: consumerism, fast fashion and ecological footprints • Geography: regenerative vs conventional agriculture, Year 12 Food Studies: food systems • Year 11 RE / Mercy Centred Learning: food insecurity and business models for Feed Me Geelong • Future Bricks workshop at the Gordon: learning about the differences between clay and hemp bricks • Hemp brick making workshop exploring alternative building materials
Opportunities to improve	• Consider the environmental impact of all purchases (stationery, catering) • Develop an ethical decision matrix for suppliers (slavery-free, recycled/sustainable materials) • Investigate a bank that makes ethical and sustainable investments • Seek out local and First Nations-led suppliers and service providers and provide them to staff as a fundraising go-to guide • Consider purchasing 'green' power from the grid • Continue highlighting opportunities for green business options in the curriculum • Continue the Tiny Home build and upcycle old furniture and materials for the Tiny Home fit-out • Waste management and investment in garden economics

GOAL 4 ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

Grounded in the idea of sufficiency and sobriety in the use of resources and energy, recognising our connectedness and interdependency so that all creation flourishes.

FOCUS AREA	CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS 2026
Heating, cooling and energy habits	• Students turn off lights and heating/cooling at the end of lessons • 'Switch Off' competition around Earth Hour, blinds and modern heating/cooling

Water	• Drink taps with a garden beneath, handwashing water reused in Food classes
Active travel	• Ride2School Day and the Ride2School Poster competition
Reducing food waste	• Food scraps collected and composted, newsletter articles encourage composting at home • Food classes prevent waste through careful ordering and using leftovers • Environmental Science students researched worm farms for the school
Reducing single-use and managing waste	• Sustainably sourced cutlery and food packaging, students bring their own containers • Recycling bins across the College, fabric scraps reused in Product Design • A dedicated printer has dramatically reduced paper waste • Keep Cup initiative for the café
Gardens and sharing used goods	• Lunchtime 'Gardening Time', Environmental Warriors grow and care for plants • Op Shop volunteering, second-hand uniforms and the GAWS blanket drive (100+ blankets)
Lifestyle learning	• Care for our Common Home personal action projects with family and friends • Year 8 Season of Creation: students calculate their water footprint • Year 11 RE action projects on aged care, waste and climate
Opportunities to improve	• Install low-flow fixtures on water taps • Choose indoor spaces to suit group sizes to reduce heating and cooling • Use public transport or bus hire for excursions • Promote plant-based meals in the canteen and at staff/school events • Plastic-free lunchbox days, recycling stations for glass, batteries and e-waste • Planned school vegetable garden/fruit trees that could be shared with the community and used to create healthy meals for donation

GOAL 5 ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology to foster ecological awareness and transformative action.

FOCUS AREA	CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS 2026
Integral ecology in Religious Education	• Year 8 CST unit introduces Laudato Si' with a practical care-for-Earth project at home • Care for our Common Home, Big Issues, Religion through the Eyes of Art, Sacred Ecology, NT Dadirri • Year 10 Faith Day: Ethical Sustainable Choices, Little Earthies: Laudato Si' – A Call to Action • VCE RE: climate crisis and Laudato Si' in ethical debates in Year 11 RE • Little Libraries project: recycled materials used to create little libraries, with a book drive promoting reading through donated books placed around the school and natural environments outside the library

Across ALL curriculum areas	• Science: water, biodiversity, waste, hemp bricks, biofuels, English: Power of Nature, fast fashion • Humanities: food insecurity and water scarcity fieldwork, HHD: sustainability and the SDGs • Technologies: sustainable fashion, product design using the SDGs, Design Futures Lab • Languages: ecological footprint (French), Laudato Si' (Italian), eco-tourism (Japanese) • Business: CSR and supply chains, Food Studies: food systems and planetary health
Culturally appropriate and alternative education	• Immersions use a Service Learning framework: prepare, immerse, respond • Dadirri unit guided by the 8 Ways of Aboriginal Learning • Year 9/10 Sacred Ecology immersion to Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef
Working with local environmental groups	• Great Ocean Road Coast Committee, Bellarine Catchment Network, Clifton Springs Curlewis Coast Care • Design Futures Lab partners: Nexus Designs, Greenspace Cultivated and Bardee, Surf Coast and Bellarine Tiny Home project
First Nations Country and local species	• Students learn about Wadawurrung Country (Drama, Dance, language, First Nations RE unit) • Native flora and fauna linocuts, lemon myrtle and native ingredients in Food classes • Year 11 Biology: Indigenous knowledge of Australian ecosystems
Learning for staff and the wider community	• Whole-staff education through the Catholic Earthcare Certificate, the Little Earthies module and Nexus PL programs • Laudato Si' vision and goals on the College website, Principal's Update, newsletter articles • Earth Hour, Earth Day, National Sustainability Week and National Recycling Week promoted • National Tree Planting Day
Opportunities to improve	• Ensure ecological information is accessible and inclusive for all community members • Embed a shared list of local indigenous plant and animal species • Help facilitate action plans from Little Earthies PD, including a change in waste management for students, staff and community: embedding practical management and education around compostable waste, and a dedicated commitment to managing rubbish around the College so students dispose of rubbish properly and understand why it matters

GOAL 6 ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

Springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to 'discover God in all things', linking spirituality with ecological action and the Gospel's call to justice.

FOCUS AREA	CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS 2026
Natural spaces for reflection and prayer	• Reconciliation Garden and gathering space, students pray in the Chapel and Reconciliation Garden • Lunchtime 'Gardening Time', immersions on Country in Kakadu and Far North Queensland
Laudato Si' themes in prayer and liturgy	• Weekly Body Prayer sessions • Daily prayers on the Student Bulletin (Compass), Mentor Group prayer, class prayer books • Religious Dimension: liturgy, prayer, eco-theology and Catholic Social Teaching in RE • Guided by the 2017 Sisters of Mercy Chapter Statement – 'deeper reverence for all creation' • Season of Creation Liturgy, Year 8 Stone Soup Liturgy

Celebrating the Church's seasons	• Season of Creation teaching resources, events and activities • Year 8 Outreach two-week Season of Creation program (2026: ecological healing, water stewardship) • World Environment Day and other significant days celebrated
Formation of staff	• Staff retreats at Santa Casa and mini staff retreats throughout the year • Formation in eco-spirituality and theology, Circle of Mercy sessions, Little Earthies online modules - Laudato Si & Our Call to an Integral Ecology
Connecting students with nature and spirit	• Care for our Common Home explores ecospirituality and Earth as sacred • Year 7 Drama: whole-class ecospirituality performance on Wadawurrung land • Religion through the Eyes of Art: environment as one of four domains of spirituality • Year 7 Italian: Saint Francis of Assisi and the Canticle of Creatures
Opportunities to improve	• Celebrate Laudato Si' Week (May) across the whole school • Develop nature-based prayer resources for classes and staff, use of College Labyrinth • Explicitly name and promote ecological virtues • Create regular outdoor prayer and learning opportunities • Reflection in the Chapel in Year 11 RE

GOAL 7 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT

Envisages a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action, listening and learning from each other to maximise our collective efforts.

FOCUS AREA	CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS 2026
Active social and ecological justice groups	• Mercy and Mission student Leadership Team (MML) set term-based sustainability goals • College Environmental Team, House-based Mercy Works, Year 8 Environmental Warriors
Understanding climate impacts	• Design Futures Lab: students visualise climate futures with AI and global data • HHD Unit 4: climate change, rising seas and extreme weather, Sacred Ecology: coral reefs
Student voice	• Student-directed Action Plan 2: MML lead sustainability plans and report at assemblies • Year 12 Mercy in Action projects, post-immersion student projects • Mercy Empowerment Dinner shaped by student testimonies, awards for environmental action
Engaging with parliament and leaders	• 'Houses at Parliament' campaign for public and community housing • Environmental Warriors write letters and petitions to government
Social and ecological events	• Clean Up Australia Day and Clean Up Schools Day • Earth Hour, Earth Day, National Sustainability Week, Winter/Spring Sleep Out
School, parish and community connections	• Café Lite (St Mary's parish), Clairvaux Book Stall and Carnival for St Bernard's parish • Felicity Project for Catholic primary schools, St Thomas Aquinas PS and St Francis Aquinas • Progress shared in the Social Justice Report, newsletter, assemblies and with other schools

Opportunities to improve	• Develop a plan for natural hazards (bushfire, flood, heatwave, storm), including supplies • Plan to meet the physical, social and spiritual needs of our community in an emergency • Consider making the school available to the wider community in an emergency • Promote National Tree Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week • Regular engagement with local, state and federal MPs on environmental issues

Actions 2026 and beyond

Whole school initiatives:

- Laudato Si' Platform Vision and Goals

Staff education/initiatives:

- Education/awareness/ Professional Learning - Integral Ecology, Laudato Si' Platform and Catholic Earthcare Program

In school/with students:

- Further development of the Mercy and Mission student leaders focus on sustainability and environmental initiatives.
- Further development of embedded Sustainability Curriculum
- Waste Management Actions for students
- Biodiversity Audit

Wider community:

- Community awareness of Laudato Si' Goals and Actions