



St Columbkille's Catholic Primary School LSAP Reflection

St Columbkille's is a two stream Catholic Primary School that is located within the Parish of St Columbkille in Corrimal and is one of the 30 systemic primary schools that belong to Catholic Education in the Diocese of Wollongong.

St Columbkille's was founded in 1904 in Corrimal and has a long, rich and celebrated history within the Corrimal community. Our traditions, values and beliefs are inspired by the charism of St Mary of the Cross and the Sisters of St Joseph.

Our community understands the importance of ensuring the school reflects its long tradition in 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 Columbkille's responds to the environmental challenges outlined in *Laudato Si'*.

Our school vision '*Learning together, Shaping futures*' and motto 'Christ is the Way' highlights our commitment to our faith, learning, and the development of students who are resilient, assertive and persistent who are looking to and building the future. We understand the importance of being constant in our commitment to be sustainable stewards and responsible citizens that contribute to the building of a better future for humanity and our planet.

We are also blessed to have the patron saint of our parish school of St Columbkille whose spirituality influences our daily activities and invites Christ to be gradually formed in us and in those whom we live and work with. This finds an expression in the way we care for our environment.

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 Columbkille'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.

St Columbkille's 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.

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.

St Columbkille's is proud to have implemented (and continues to promote) through the Initial School Environment Management Plan, a 3 year plan, the following strategies for sustainability.

- Encouraged staff ownership and responsibility in promoting and supporting the school's ecological conversion journey. (Ongoing)
- Documented the incorporation of ecological themes in liturgy and prayer and acknowledge some key environmental days. (Ongoing)
- Documented roles and responsibilities for the various environmental actions within the daily routine of the school. Educated and communicated to students, staff and wider school community about the various environmental actions within the daily routine of the school.
- Utilised CEDoW Environmental Education Grant to fund the purchase of resources to support new waste management procedures.
- Developed and streamlined a school-wide waste management system that is sustainable and part of everyday practice.
- Developed whole school procedures outlining roles and responsibilities for the waste management system, garden maintenance and management. (Ongoing - Reviewed and updated annually)
- Waste free lunch boxes are encouraged on a Tuesday (rewards in sticker book and two garden gnomes awarded to the best class each week).
- Daily Crunch and Sip food scraps composted.
- Composting system and worm farm that is managed by “The Patch” students. There are three compost bins and one worm farm. They are all located near ‘The Patch’.
- Responsibility of ‘The Patch’ is currently managed by parent/grandparent volunteers with the assistance of “The Patch” student volunteers and a staff member as their contact person.
- ‘The Patch’ gardens contain seasonal vegetables, fruits, herbs, two fruit trees and some flowers.
- Aboriginal garden in the Infants playground incorporates Australian Natives and some bush tucker plants.
- Two water tanks for “The Patch” and a 20,000 litre underground tank for the irrigation of the grassed playground.
- Twelve solar panels that are on top of the school building for the school's use. Sensor lights in all classrooms and administration areas and LED lights.
- Regular servicing for air conditioners to ensure efficiency.

St Columbkille's actions for the second School Environment Management Plan (SEMP II) are:

- Create an annual school award that recognises a member/members of the school community that has shown exemplified care for God's creation and connection to the environment in both words and action.
- Staff engagement in a Spirituality Day exploring ecological conversion, eco theology and eco spirituality.

- increase Student learning and engagement in Laudato Si' through focus in RE Creation Units.
- Staff engagement in professional development on the seven goals of the Laudato Si' Action Platform.
- Classroom learning and teaching programs are monitored for key environmental units, identifying cross curriculum links for sustainability (and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander, Asia and Its Neighbours) programming, scope and sequences.
- Staff to connect learning and teaching to their Grade's allocated outdoor garden/green area
- Raising staff and school awareness of the School's Aboriginal Garden that includes use of the space to connect with learning and teaching.
- Devise strategies to reduce the waste generated by the canteen, catering events and the students.
- Develop Green Catering Procedures written for canteen, school and hospitality events.
- Reintroducing waste management streams for St Columbkille's, including REDcycling, FOGO and Return and Earn to the School.
- Installation of water filling stations to encourage more sustainable practices.
- Incorporate an ecological dimension in the school Vision and Mission Statement.
- Promotion of environmental initiatives at St Columbkille's through the addition of a section on the School website, Parent Information Booklet, Kindergarten e-book and ongoing posts on social media and CEDoW communication channels.

St Columbkille's has participated in a number of whole staff Professional Development and Staff Formation in eco-spirituality, eco-theology and ecological conversion titled Who Is My Neighbour? Called to Ecological Conversion, Listening to the Spirit of the Great South Land and in 2023 will undertake another Professional Development session entitled, Praise Be. Living Our Ecological Conversion.

Through involvement in CEDoW Environmental Education Grants Program. St Columbkille's has been successful in obtaining two grants. Firstly to set up education and resourcing for sustainable waste management practices within the school (classrooms and outside areas). The second grant (2022) is to be used to establish and set up garden equipment boxes for each grade and have grades responsible for specific garden/green areas within the school.

Assisting St Columbkille's to implement and engage the school community in these environmental initiatives and procedures are our involvement and participation in the Wollongong Environment Network (WEN) that aims to support school communities respond to Laudato Si' and implement environmental stewardship and sustainability, the CEDoW Environmental Education Action Policy and the Earthcare school program where St Columbkille's has achieved Level 3 Certification.

St Columbkille's is Inspired by Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement – [Cry of the Earth. Cry of the Poor and Bishop Brian's Diocesan Pastoral Message](#) when planning for and implementing environmental actions.

Another inspiration St Columbkille's looks at when designing and planning environmental initiatives is the Assisi Framework:

Across the focus areas the goals of this plan are:

- **Whole School Planning**

Environmental Plan (SEMP), Strategic Plan, Governance, Policy, Environmental Team

- **Religious Dimension**

Catholic Social Teaching, Celebration, Liturgy, Prayer, Embedding of eco-theology and Catholic Social Teaching principles in RE Curriculum, Formation in eco-spirituality & theology

- **Teaching & Learning**

Curriculum, Syllabus Perspectives & Materials, Professional Development, Environmental education integrated into all stages and KLAS, Scope & Sequences for environmental education, Curriculum links to environmental action in school

- **Ethical Resource Use**

Individual and School Ecological Footprints, Administrative Practices, Waste Management – recycling, Green catering, purchasing, audits

- **Caring for Country**

Physical surrounds & Maintenance, Biodiversity - Grounds developed to enhance environmental education – eg. “Outdoor Living Classroom”, outdoor education, landscaping (equipment, shade, safety and seating reflect an awareness and consideration of environmental impact)

- **Community Relationships**

Networks and Partnerships, Student Life

Throughout the year St Columbkille’s participates in the following initiatives.

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH

- World Environment Day Liturgy
- Walk to School Day

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR

- Mission Month
- Project Compassion Donations
- St Vincent De Paul Winter Appeal
- St Vincent De Paul Return and Earn
- Socktober donation drive

ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

- purchase recycled paper
- school lighting on sensor lights

ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

- School wide recycling practices
- water tanks
- solar panels

ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- Programming for sustainability across the school in learning and teaching units
- Teachers participation in Wollongong Environment Network Day
- Primary Student Day participation
- Year 5 participation in Wollongong Botanic Gardens Day

ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

- World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation
- Season of Creation

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT

- Clean Up Australia Day
- Christmas food Hamper appeal for St Vincent de Paul