

# Sandhurst Catholic Education



Kinship  
with the Earth



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## *Covenant Prayer with the Land*

Today let us make a covenant with this land.

As new fruit can be grafted onto the branch of a mature tree,  
may we wish to be grafted onto the ancient heritage  
of this land of our first people, so that its life may flow through us.

We commit ourselves to this land we live in and to all who belong to it.  
We will care for it with gentleness, patience, strength and compassion, rather  
than merely as something to be bought and sold.

We will look on the land as a gift for which we are truly thankful and  
undertake the privileged duty of respecting and looking after it.

We thank God - the Great Creator Spirit, for all the earth provides:  
water, food, and all the riches above and below the ground, and undertake  
to use them wisely, sparingly, while ensuring that any development brings  
danger to no one.

As we enter more deeply into the Spirit of the land we see it as a sacrament  
and icon of our Creator Spirit.

Let us be still now - listen to the breath of the Spirit that has blown through  
the land for ages past - today - and always - for this is...  
the Spirit of the Dreaming.

***Elizabeth 'Betty' Pike***

The Power of Story  
Spirit of Dreaming  
Elizabeth 'Betty' Pike  
John Garratt Publishing (2011) p.185



# Sandhurst Catholic Education and Sustainability

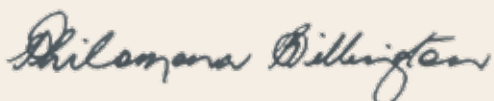
## Foreword

*Kinship with the Earth Education for Sustainability Framework* is the manifestation of a journey of ecological conversion for the Catholic Education Sandhurst system of schools. Ecological conversion involves a new way of seeing, thinking, feeling and acting in relation to the natural world – God’s creation.

This journey began with a commitment to changing habits and has grown into a deeper understanding of our shared responsibility for creation for future generations. *Kinship with the Earth* is in itself more than a curriculum framework, but rather a commitment to sustaining the knowledge, understanding and commitment of future generations to relationship with and care for God’s creation. In this journey we have been enriched by the wisdom of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters and we give thanks for this relationship which is valued deeply by the community of Catholic Education Sandhurst.

The Curriculum Framework is underpinned by four strands which provide the theological and philosophical basis for the knowledge, skills and values articulated to enrich the lives of the students, families and teachers who engage with *Kinship with the Earth*. The four strands - Moral and Ethical Decision Making, Social Justice and Sustainability, Understanding Sustainability and Building Preferred Futures – represent an integration of faith and life. The framework is informed by contemporary research and practice in sustainability coupled with the wisdom of Sacred Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching and enriched by increasing cultural understanding of our Australian identity and the earth we share with future generations.

I commend the many educators and friends of Catholic education in Sandhurst who have collaborated to bring *Kinship with the Earth* to publication and the many teachers who will animate it in their own lives and the lives of students.



**Ms Philomena Billington**

Director of Catholic Education  
Diocese of Sandhurst

August 2012

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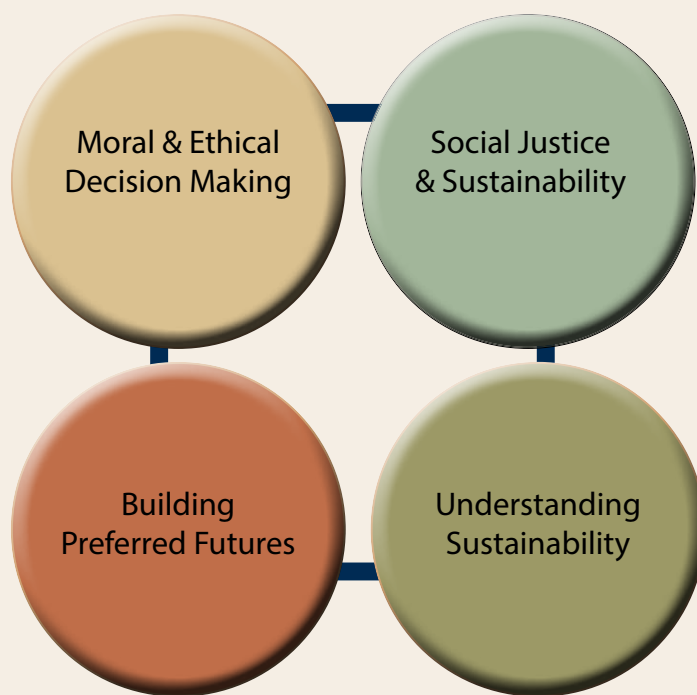
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# Kinship with the Earth

*Kinship with the Earth* is a holistic approach to Education for Sustainability. The aim of this Curriculum Framework is to assist our Catholic schools to understand, as Christians, the mandate we have to nurture and preserve all aspects of God's creation.

*Kinship with the Earth* Curriculum Framework is structured around the following organising strands or content areas.



## **Moral & Ethical Decision Making:**

Informed Conscience, Responding as Christians

## **Social Justice & Sustainability:**

Ecological Conversion, Catholic Social Teaching, Scriptural Foundations

## **Understanding Sustainability:**

Teaching & Learning, School Operations & Processes, Management of Resources, Community Engagement & Partnerships, Story & Celebration

## **Building Preferred Futures:**

Restoring Hope, Student Democracy & Youth Voice, Knowledge, Skills & Behaviour, Green Skills & Practice, Personal Action.

## Moral and Ethical Decision Making

The Moral and Ethical Decision-making content strand of *Kinship with the Earth* seeks to develop the understanding of the moral and ethical principles which underpin the call to care for the earth. It brings together faith understanding and social justice principles which are grounded in the Tradition of the Catholic Church. At its most stark it calls



*'on humanity to weigh the cost of economic prosperity against environmental bankruptcy. As a nation's wealth increases, the environment suffers, as a nation's wealth comes at the cost of the planet's delicately balanced natural resources. When a nation's economy is an extracting economy, it is a terminal economy because the Earth's seeming abundance is, in fact, limited (Berry. 1999, 1988).'*

Berry (1988) maintains that humans view the natural world as a deposit of earth that can be exploited for profit and power. Similarly, Dobson (2006) argues that the exploitative mentality is far removed from viewing the Earth as a "part of every element of ourselves and that we must all begin to understand the finite nature of our land, our seas, and our rivers" (p.6). Moreover, Pope John Paul II (1990) argued that the ecological crisis is due to "a callous disregard for the hidden, yet perceivable requirements of the order and harmony which govern nature itself" (p. 2). Such points of order and harmony require that humans view themselves within a different paradigm from one that assumes humanity is a separate and special species, and that other creatures are devoid of rights.

Pope John Paul II (1990) argues that the global environmental crisis is fundamentally a spiritual and moral crisis that has influenced the way humans view and treat the Earth. Rasmussen (1996) adds to the argument that the enormity of the environmental crisis should be seen and acknowledged from the beginning as having a spiritual as well as a scientific dimension. Earth spirituality, within the Judeo-Christian tradition, has the potential for many to address the spiritual malaise brought about through alienation from the natural world. *Kinship with the Earth* is inspired to restore and renew the Earth because it reveals God to all humanity – it is a locus of understanding God.

Recent writers on the themes of the Earth as spiritual, as sacred, as sacrament, and as a community of subjects, recognise that the health of all creatures is dependent on the health of the Earth itself for everything exists within the environment of Earth (Berry, 1998; Edwards, 2007). Echlin (2004) expresses Earth as "the art of loving God, present in the Earth" (p.30). It is this depth of spirituality, not rational environmental principles, which some scholars believe must be present to sustain the Earth against superior forces, that is, a human centred, consumerist, secular and materialistic way of being in the world which works against sustainability (Carroll, 2004). O'Murchu (1997) argues that humans need to reclaim a spirituality of the Earth because it is an inherent attribute of humanness. It is not an addition but in fact intrinsic to being a holistic person.

Spiritual ecological consciousness is an extension of the previous notions of the environmental crisis, ecological consciousness and Earth spirituality. It is especially attentive to the Judeo-Christian perspective of the sacredness of the Earth. Sacredness is understood in this context as holy, as of



special importance to God. According to Altman (2002) “ a thing or place becomes sacred ultimately to us when it is perceived as somehow able to energise within us those feelings and concepts we associate with the spiritual dimension of life” (p.4). This perspective is enhanced by a faith dimension that recognises God as the creator of the universe and therefore intimately involved with God’s creation. According to the Judeo-Christian tradition, creation belongs to God and therefore humans are subservient to the design of God for creation. Humans are expected to honour, respect and nurture the Earth because creation is a sacrament for in it God is revealed like an author is revealed through a book (St Augustine as cited in Harrison 1992). Spiritual ecological consciousness embraces the teaching and traditions of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition regarding the intimacy of



a covenantal relationship between God and His creation. It is imbued with the traditional call to stewardship of the Earth as well as the current call to ecological conversion, because the initial relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world has become estranged, distorted and fragmented to the detriment of the total Earthly community (Pope John Paul II, 1990).

Spiritual ecological consciousness is, therefore, the conscious acceptance that each person is spiritual and is one's most ecological self when experiencing connectedness to the natural world and the Spirit God through "our self-understanding as a human-planetary species" (O'Murchu, 1997, p. 25). Burkhardt and Nagai-Jacobson (2002) maintain that experiencing spirituality through connectedness with all the manifestations of the natural world can foster appreciation of our true spiritual selves. It can encompass a sense of the sacredness of nature that is inherent in creation, or it can direct a person to the Creator God through a loving, energetic appreciation of nature. Spiritual ecological consciousness helps to address the spiritual malaise associated with loss of connectedness to the natural world.

Dominant World View	Deep Ecology	Spiritual Ecological Consciousness
Dominance over nature	Harmony with nature	Stewardship of creation
Natural environment as resource for humans	All nature has intrinsic worth/ bio-species equality	All creation is valued by God and has intrinsic worth
Material/economic growth for growing human population	Elegantly simple material needs	Elegantly simple material needs
Belief in ample resource reserves	Earth 'supplies' limited	Earth 'gifts' are finite
High technological progress and solutions	Appropriate technology; non-dominating science	Myth of technology 'progress' is flawed
Consumerism	Doing with Enough	Care for the common good
National/centralised community	Minority tradition/bio-region	Social justice requires attention to local/global issues

**Adapted from Devall & Sessions *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*, (1985 p. 69).**

Religious communities which are founded on the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures find in them both the imperative and the guidance to discern ways of being and acting in the world which faithfully respond to the creative love of God... finding guidance for living and acting in the traditions of social and moral teaching that have arisen over centuries of gospel-inspired practice. (Source of Life 2005, p.69).

In *Gaudium et Spes*, the Second Vatican Council reminded us that we have written within our hearts "a law written by God" and that we discover this law in the depth of our consciences. The bishops told us, "Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of human beings where they find themselves alone with God, whose voice can be heard in their inmost being." (Brennan 2004) Catholic theology

stresses the important role that conscience exercises in determining right from wrong. It enables us to recognise what is loving and what is not, what helps growth and what inhibits it. It is the final norm for judging the morality of one's actions. It can be defined as the attempt to discern the moral values at stake within particular situations. Others' judgements may assist but not replace responsibility for one's own conscience.

In order to be fully moral, that is truly human, we need to continue to form our conscience with the assistance of church teachings. It is an approach that respects human choosing in the midst of the believing faith community. In Pope John Paul II's Message for World Peace Day 1999 he stated 'People are obliged to follow their conscience in all circumstances and cannot be forced to act against it... Respect for a person's conscience, where the image of God [himself] is reflected (cf. Gen 1:26-27), means that we can only propose the truth to others, who are then responsible for accepting it.'

'Christian Morality is not simply about right and wrong; it is about developing one's whole potential, natural and supernatural, it is about holiness. Morality, faith and spirituality go together very closely ... the commandments largely express negative requirements: "thou shalt not ..", and we can observe every negative commandment perfectly and it still does not say very much about us, for it says only what we have not done'. Without doing away with the ten commandments, Jesus added the beatitudes, as they took us to a higher level of thinking and morality in relationship with a loving God' (Robinson, Certificate of RE NSW).

There are many complex issues in the world today to which the young people in our schools and in the wider society are exposed. In these situations, it is the role of the educator in partnership with parents to legitimise conversations and provide information and debate in a balanced Christian environment, free from media hype and misinformation. 'All of us, like the bishops, are obligated to play our respective roles in the societies of which we are part, forming and informing our consciences, and acting according to our consciences ..if we can provide students with the map and the compass for life, there is a greater prospect that grace and gifts of the Spirit will find fertile ground as these fresh graduates try to make sense of their adult lives in a complex world. (Brennan, 2004, Conference Address, Sandhurst)

Watts (2009) provides a valuable model for engaging in the conversations that will inspire and enable moral and ethical decision-making and lead to a deeper relationship with God through understanding and a deeper connectedness and kinship with the earth.







**Figure 1:4 Ascending Schema for Embracing Ecological Conversion**  
**(Watts, 2009)**



## Social Justice and Sustainability

The Social Justice and Sustainability content strand seeks to develop understandings about the responsibility of Christians to work for the wellbeing of all God's creation. This responsibility derives from the moral imperative found in Scripture to be mindful of maintaining right relationships with creation. The Social Justice teachings of the Catholic Church call us to ecological conversion and to recognize environmental stewardship as the responsibility of all.



This content strand explores the scriptural foundations within the Judeo - Christian tradition that illustrate how humanity has been entrusted with the ongoing work of creation. Explicit in both the Old and New Testaments is the mandate to care for and to responsibly manage the gift of creation.

As Christians, we believe that God is the creator of all there is and that this creation is good. It reflects God's own goodness, reveals God to us and allows us to experience the presence of God. We also believe that humanity is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). There is a clear mandate that humans are to tend to creation (Genesis 2:15), not to possess it. Stewardship is not a license to destroy; it implies careful, responsible management of the creation that is entrusted to our care. "Not only has God given the earth to humankind, who must use it with respect for the original good purpose for which it was given, but humankind too is God's gift to humankind." (Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus )

It is clear that environmental issues present major challenges for the whole of humanity in the 21st century and Christians have been called to rediscover the moral and scriptural foundations that underpin our beliefs about creation. "A way of life that disregards and damages God's creation, forces the poor into greater poverty, and threatens the right of future generations to a healthy environment and to their fair share of the earth's wealth and resources, is contrary to the vision of the gospel." (The Call of Creation: God's Invitation and the Human Response 2002)

Humanity must be increasingly aware of the links between the natural ecology and the human ecology. Experience shows us that disregard for the environment is harmful to human co-existence. Humanity is intimately connected with the whole life system of the planet and the complex interaction between living creatures and the atmosphere, the land and the water systems.

"In justice, it is an urgent task for Christians today to be reconciled with all creation, and to undertake faithfully our responsibility of stewardship of God's gifts. We need to experience a change of heart." (Australian Catholic Bishops. 2002 Social Justice Sunday Statement)



Catholic Social Justice teaching urges us to think and act responsibly towards all creation.

Major themes in Catholic Social Teaching include:

**Human Dignity**  
**Community**  
**Rights and duties**  
**Option for the poor**  
**Participation**  
**Economic Justice**  
**Stewardship of Creation**  
**Solidarity**  
**Role of Government**  
**Promotion of Peace**

We need to understand the ethical significance of global interdependence; that every person is responsible for maintaining ecological harmony. If we understand the universal purpose of creation, we will respect and foster the dignity of all humanity, promote equitable use of the world's resources and protect the environment. Much of creation's destruction is caused by ignorance and a lust for power and possessions.

Caring for the earth is not just a scientific, economic or political issue. It is a spiritual issue. Catholic schools have a moral and Christian imperative to educate students to care for the earth.





## Understanding Sustainability

The Understanding Sustainability content strand outlines the need for whole school and community education and engagement with sustainability. Global issues such as climate change, water shortage, rising cost of resources have a direct impact on the ecosystem socially, economically and environmentally.

Education for Sustainability (EfS) is grounded in three basic understandings:-



- Education**
- **about the environment** where we focus on students' understanding of important facts, concepts and theories.
  - **in the environment** which involves students in direct contact with the natural world to develop awareness, affinity and care for the environment.
  - **for the environment** where we aim to promote a willingness and ability to adopt life styles that are compatible with the wise use of environmental resources and minimising impacts on the natural and social world.

Primarily the function of Education for Sustainability is to influence teaching and learning to develop and extend skills and knowledge, promote, investigate, analyse and ultimately change practice in people. This is necessary to develop a new 'mindset' for environmental protection, sustainable use of the world's natural resources and social justice.

Over the past four decades Education for Sustainability has developed around eight Key Principles:

**Transformation and change**

**Education for all and lifelong learning**

**Systems thinking**

**Envisioning a better future**

**Critical thinking and reflection**

**Participation**

**Partnerships for Change**

**Relationships with the natural world**

These principles are based on the view that people need to know, both **how** to act and **what** to act upon, as well as **why** they should act towards a more sustainable future.

*Refer to Page 31 for Principles of Education for Sustainability Descriptors*

*Kinship with the Earth* is aligned to the Australian National Environmental Education Statement (NEES 2005) which classifies Education for Sustainability into the following areas:

**Learning and Teaching** for students, teachers and the whole school community about, in and for the environment

**Curriculum Organisation** around VELS, AusVELS and AuSSI Vic outcomes, leading to more challenging, real and engaging learning for students

**Resource Management** of school energy use through tracking, monitoring and behaviour change. Systems and procedures coordinated by students that save the school money, protect the environment and engage the wider community

**Physical Surrounds** ensuring that the natural aspects of the school grounds, and buildings become part of the learning experience for students

**Governance** and management structures that lead to whole school plans for Education for Sustainability

**Networks and Partnerships** with supportive organizations that assist the school with projects while promoting Education for Sustainability to the wider community



## Building Preferred Futures

Science, economic modelling and a huge amount of environmental indicators express the concern that there is potentially a time when ecologically the planet we call home will not be able to sustain human activity as we know it today. This cataclysmic view of our future is often called 'the probable future'. However, Building Preferred Futures is a mindset and learning approach that believes that solutions to current environmental, political, social and even economic issues are 'possible' to overcome, given the ingenuity of the human race.



Building Preferred Futures therefore, gives precedence to what is possible, not probable. It is both teaching and learning based on the predication that if it is possible, we should aim at making this future preferable.

In essence, Building Preferred Futures lies in the notion that because the future hasn't actually happened as yet we still have time to create a new course for the future. The often described terrible outcomes of climate change have yet to occur. This means we are in a perfect position to alter the Probable Future: This is an alternate path to business as usual. The future after all is human made!

One of the biggest worries amongst young people (and many adults for that matter) recorded by psychologists is the terrible future painted by climate change, peak oil, environmental destruction, animal extinction, sea level rise, unemployment – just to name a few! You can well imagine why young people would be anxious about stepping into a future world that looks so grim. *Kinship with the Earth* is designed to push contemporary Education for Sustainability (EfS) to be focused on a proactive step to restore faith in the future for young people. This is predicated on empowering young people to explore issues and concepts and to design proactive action towards making the planet a better place to live. In the context of *Kinship with the Earth*, teaching and learning for sustainability should be a constant celebration of the human spirit as guided by faith in God. Restoring faith also includes the notion that adults need to restore their faith in the capability of young people.

Sustainability gives ideal opportunity for young people to share in discussing issues, designing alternatives and evaluating outcomes. A key component of EfS is to include young people in all levels of preparation, development and implementation of sustainability strategy and practice. Programs, projects and especially the curriculum must be designed and negotiated amongst all stakeholders. Another key component of celebrating the voice of our youth is to include students in authentic democratic processes.

This is very different from youth or student leadership though student leadership is an integral part. Student democracy is predicated on the notion of giving young people tools and experience in the exercising of the democratic process. For some schools this is seen as creating a Student Representative Council (SRC). It really goes much further than this. Students should be encouraged to gain skills in the democratic process, understand good governance and more importantly how to influence society in a positive way to achieve desired outcomes. Risk taking and more importantly learning from mistakes is pivotal. Students need to get into the second nature of 'weighing up the options', using independent and informed decision making and have a clear sense of cause and effect.



Another key component to Building Preferred Futures is ensuring that we develop worthwhile activities for young people. Simply put: avoid the clichéd one-off events. Students have a right to a more authentic experience and must be made to feel valuable via their actions. Learning should be proactive, enquiry based and consistently based in applied learning. As a key motto Education for Sustainability is: "Applied learning, applied learning and more applied learning".

While it is essential we imagine a better preferred future and what that may contain, they can be empty words if not acted upon. Ideally, a good Education for Sustainability program should have a sense of everyone working individually and together to achieve a community goal. These actions should be consistent and congruent with teaching and learning and your sustainability plan. The simplest and most effective way to restore hope and value in young people is to give opportunity to positive actions that lead to a better and brighter future.

The world is indeed a wonderful and mysterious place to live. Therefore a key tenant of sustainability is to get young people out and into this big wide habitat called earth. Ensuring that young people get regular opportunity to feel part of God's creation is vital. This may take the form of meditative experiences, Outdoor Education experiences, conservation and restoration experiences or simply a walk through the park. Earth Education practitioners argue that people will not care for something they first don't love or feel an affinity with.

In another context, experience can be seen as an action that has led to a new perspective via doing. It is essential that through exploration of ideas and their implementation students be given the opportunity to try out ideas.

An important component to strengthening young people's resolve for a positive future is to make space for the telling of 'their' story and acknowledgment of 'their' perspective. Clearly contemporary media, socially based or otherwise, are the conduits in which young people explore their conceptual ideas, values and reflection on new knowledge and skills. The discussion of ideas with other schools helps to explore ideas on action, leadership and achievement as well as provide a safe profile of action already undertaken. Social media is also a very effective way for young people to influence peers to undertake sustainability action, even if it is a one day event such as Sandhurst Switches Off. We are suggesting that everyone should understand that every little bit helps. Sustainability is actually about making little actions every day.

Building Preferred Futures extends teaching and learning to give young people a new literacy. A literacy of hope and positive action. It also gives students the skills, knowledge and intrinsic mindset that will offer multitudes of possibilities in choosing a professional life based in the merging sector of green skills. University of New South Wales (UNSW) data suggests that by current growth in this sector by 2025, one in four jobs in Australia will require a sustainability based literacy.

Finally, this is simply a question of stewardship of God's creation. What we do now in the present time is ultimately handed down to the next generations. We have a responsibility, as Christians, as adults and as educators to ensure that in years to come all the world's people can enjoy natural beauty, social and ecological health and the wonders of God's creation.

# The Synergy of Source of Life and Sustainability

To lead students to a deeper understanding of Ecological Conversion, we need to realise that this conversion is strongly grounded in a theology of creation.

Within the Source of Life Religious Education Curriculum there is sequential development of understandings around God's revelation through creation.

Several content strands in Source of Life are strongly aligned with the context and content of *Kinship with the Earth*.

## **GOD**

God is the creator of all life. Made in the image and likeness of God, we become co-creators and must work towards the sacredness of all creation.

## **SCRIPTURE**

Scripture is a prime source of Revelation. Through the sacred writings of the Old and New, we are called to maintain right relationships with all creation.

## **SACRAMENTS**

Creation reveals the beauty of God's presence in people and our world. The awe and wonder of God's creation is sacramental.

## **CHRISTIAN LIFE**

Through the teachings and values of Jesus Christ, Christians come to understand the dignity of the human person and their responsibility to work for the common good of society.

*"No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We have to learn to see the world anew."*

**Albert Einstein**

# A TIME TO REFLECT

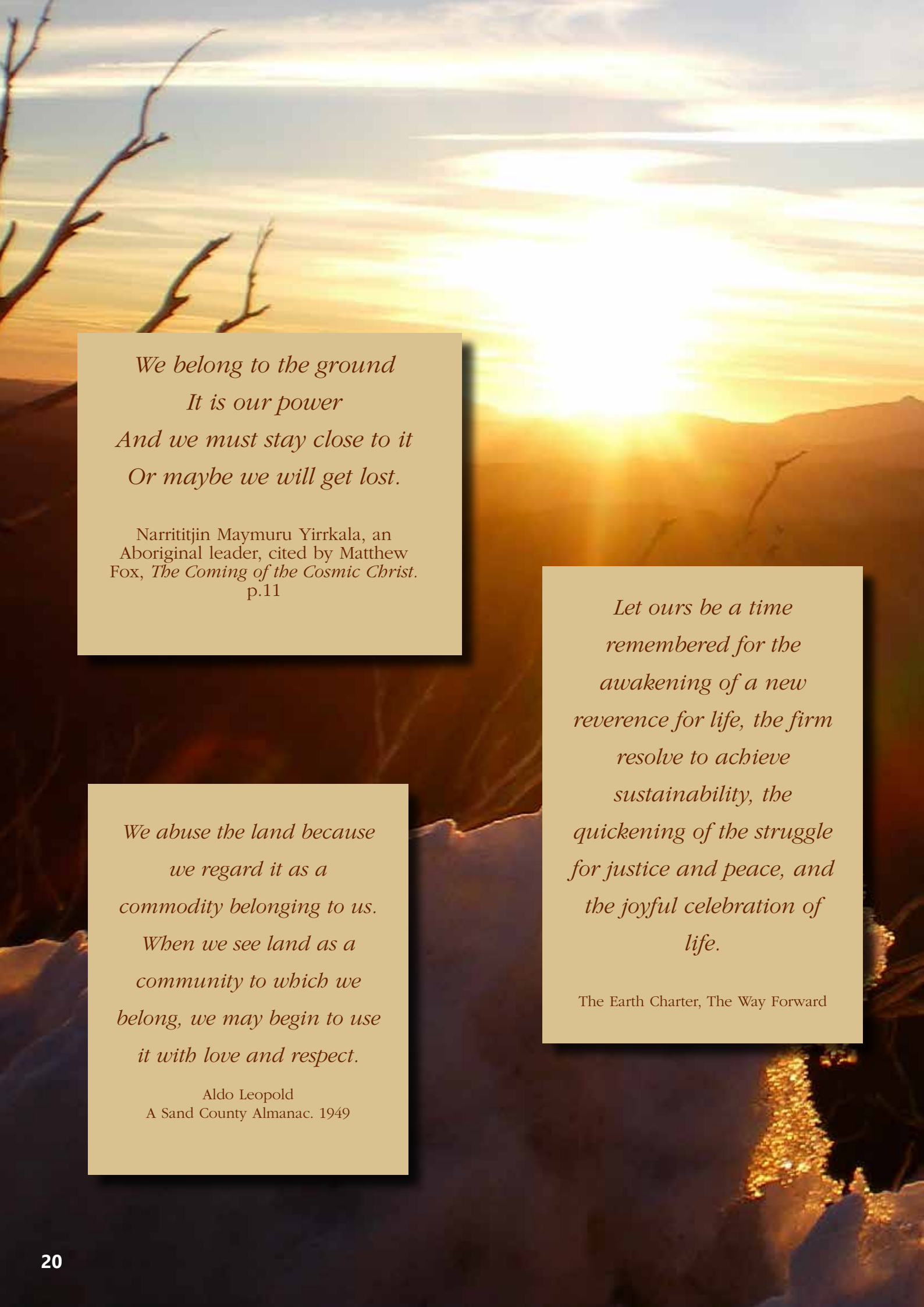
*“...We commit ourselves to the land we live in and to all who belong to it...”*











*We belong to the ground  
It is our power  
And we must stay close to it  
Or maybe we will get lost.*

Narritjin Maymuru Yirrkala, an  
Aboriginal leader, cited by Matthew  
Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*.  
p.11

*We abuse the land because  
we regard it as a  
commodity belonging to us.  
When we see land as a  
community to which we  
belong, we may begin to use  
it with love and respect.*

Aldo Leopold  
A Sand County Almanac. 1949

*Let ours be a time  
remembered for the  
awakening of a new  
reverence for life, the firm  
resolve to achieve  
sustainability, the  
quickenning of the struggle  
for justice and peace, and  
the joyful celebration of  
life.*

The Earth Charter, The Way Forward

*The earth is at the same  
time mother*

*She is mother of all  
For contained in her are  
the seeds of all.*

*The earth of humankind  
contains all moistness,  
All verdancy, all  
germinating power.*

*It is in so many ways  
fruitful*

*Yet it forms not only the  
basic raw material for  
humankind*

*But also the substance of  
God's Son.*

Hildegard of Bingen

*The earth we abuse and  
the living things we kill,  
will, in the end, take their  
revenge for in exploiting  
their presence we are  
diminishing our future.*

Mary Mannes. More In Anger. 1958

*Man's dominion over  
inanimate and other  
living beings granted by  
the Creator is not absolute;  
it is limited by concern  
for the quality of life of  
his neighbor, including  
generations to come; it  
requires a religious respect  
for the integrity of creation.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church.  
Part Three, Life in Christ #2415



# Aboriginal Australians

Our Traditional Custodians call us to:

## listen...

Country... is a nourishing terrain. Country is a place that gives and receives life. Not just imagined or represented, it is lived in and lived with... Country is multi-dimensional – it consists of people, animals, plants, Dreamings, underground, earth, soils, minerals and waters, surface water, and air...

Country in Aboriginal English is not only a common noun but also a proper noun. People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy...

From Strategy for Aboriginal Managed Lands in Victoria, December 2003.

Through your closeness to the land you touched the sacredness of man's relationship with God, for the land was proof of a power in life greater than yourselves.

You did not spoil the land, use it up, exhaust it, and then walk away from it. You realised your land was related to your source of life."

Pope John Paul 11 Alice Springs 1986





# learn...

*Country for Aboriginal people is multi-dimensional- it consists of people, animals, plants, Dreamings; underground, earth, soils, minerals and waters, surface water, and air.*

There is sea country and land country; in some areas people talk about sky country. Country has origins and a future; it exists both in and through time. The Ancestral spirits traversed the whole area - land, sea, beach, reef, sea grass bed, sky, and fresh water sources. The law of the land is also the law of the sea, and sea, like land, is country that is known, named, sung, danced, painted, loved, harvested and cared for.

*Each country has its sacred origins, its sacred and dangerous places, its sources of life and its sites of death. Each has its own people, its own Law, its own way of life. In many parts of Australia, the ultimate origin of the life of country is the earth itself.*

In Aboriginal Australia, each country is surrounded by other countries. The boundaries are rarely absolute; differences are known, respected and culturally elaborated in many ways. Each nourishing terrain, each promised land, was cared for. Aboriginal people's land management practices, especially their skilled and detailed use of fire, were responsible for the long-term productivity and biodiversity of this continent. In addition to fire, other practices include selective harvesting, the extensive organisation of sanctuaries, and the promotion of regeneration of plants and animals. Organised on a country by country basis, but with mutual responsibilities being shared along ancestral tracks, and through trade, marriage, and other social/ritual relationships.

*Management of the life of the country constitutes one of Aboriginal people's strongest and deepest purposes in life, as well as making up much of their daily lives in so far as it is still possible for people to take care of their country.*





Knowledge - local, detailed, tested through time - is the basis for being in country. Aboriginal people take notice of their country, and through the attention they give to country, their communication becomes two-way. Communication is based on the ability to understand what is happening and where it is happening. The stars guide and tell of the seasons to come, they tell when it is time for ceremony, time to find food, when to hunt and when it's nesting time for the animals.

*Country, ideally, is synonymous with life.*

Life for Aboriginal people needs no justification. Just as no justification is required to hunt and kill in order to support one's own life, so there is no justification required in asserting that other living things also want to live, and have the right to live their own lives. The interdependence of all life within country constitutes a hard but essential lesson - those who destroy their country ultimately destroy themselves.

## act...

Aboriginal people have a deep connection to country.

Let us appreciate all the hard work the old people did in maintaining the Creator's gift – this land, its water ways, plants and animals and all living creatures.

Let us celebrate, be proud and boast as a nation that we are the keepers of one of the oldest living cultures in the world!

*Take a moment and reflect on the words of a Mutthi Mutthi woman Vicki Clark "The ultimate Law given by my old people taught me we are equal in the whole of creation, the Creator gave us the responsibility to take care of all that had been created, we have to co-exist with creation, our job is to nurture and sustain the land, the animals, water ways that had been gifted".*

Our actions in creating sustainable environments will carry on the work Aboriginal people modeled in this land for centuries.

Kinship with the Earth is a document that will guide you to live more sustainably and to educate those in our schools about caring for the environment.

Reflecting on the practices of Aboriginal Australians when teaching young people in our schools, will guide them to a more complete understanding of Stewardship of God's Creation.







## Understanding the Dreaming

*To know the country is to know the story of how it came into being.*

That story also carries the knowledge of how the human custodians of that country came into being. The relationship between other species and country is that they too belong there because they have their origins in Dreaming. Other species act as they do, communicate as they do, live where they do, and interact as they do because Dreaming made them that way.

The Australian continent is criss-crossed with the tracks of the Dreamings: walking, slithering, crawling, flying, chasing, hunting, weeping, dying, giving birth. Performing rituals, distributing the plants, making the landforms and water, establishing things in their own places, making the relationships between one place and another. Where they travelled, where they stopped, where they lived the events of their lives, all these places are sources and sites of Law. These tracks and sites, and the Dreamings associated with them, make up the sacred geography of Australia; they are visible in paintings and engravings; they are sung in the songs, depicted in body painting and sacred objects; they form the basis of a major dimension of the land tenure system for most Aboriginal people.

*The purpose and meaning of life are located in the relationships between people, their home countries, their Dreamings, the plants and animals, geological formations and waters, and each other.*

Dreaming places are sites where life and Law continue to be brought into being. Where Dreamings performed actions, or where they came to rest, these places are known as sacred sites in contemporary terminology. The people who belong to the site, and who are its owners and custodians in Aboriginal Law, know how the site should be managed, and they assert their right to be consulted. In many areas the sacred site is protected. No hunting, fishing, gathering or burning can take place within prescribed boundaries.

Rituals of well-being involve a variety of procedures, the most complex of which are ritual performances including song, dance, and body paint, which are carried out over long periods of time. There are also modest ritual actions in which people use green branches to strike the tree, the stone, the antbed, or whatever it is that is associated with the plant or animal species. The action of striking is intended to stimulate the consciousness and activity of the Dreaming, with the effect that that species will be stimulated to more growth.



To promote the well-being of animals and plants it is necessary that the appropriate rituals be performed by the correct people (that is, the people whose totem or Dreaming that species is or whose country it is by other forms of relationship). Sites repeat across the landscape, so that the well-being of any species does not depend merely on one site but is linked to people in many places, all of whom carry out their responsibilities.

*The differences established in the Dreaming are differences which generate mutual interdependence. No person or family can be self-sufficient; all depend on the other to sustain the rich and enduring life of the world.*

*Everything that exists owes its existence to Dreaming.*

## Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education (FIRE)

### The FIRE Carrier Project

The FIRE Carrier Project is a joint initiative of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria and the Opening the Doors Foundation with the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office to promote Reconciliation through education in Sandhurst schools. The FIRE Carrier Project seeks to keep the Reconciliation flame alight in schools, educating the wider community about Reconciliation and our shared history and cultures.

All FIRE Carriers are asked to remember Michael McDaniel's words

***"My invitation to everyone is that in your everyday power, in your work place with your regular authority, with your everyday resources, turn your mind occasionally to what you can do, for the benefit of all Aboriginal people".***

*Prof Michael McDaniel, Wiradjuri Man*



# The Aim of Kinship with the Earth

*Kinship with the Earth* is a curriculum framework which will support schools of the diocese to engage in sustainability practice grounded in a scriptural understanding of stewardship.

Sandhurst schools are encouraged through this program to involve students in the establishment of systems and procedures that aim to reduce their impact on the environment.

Schools are supported in the process of tracking their energy use, water consumption, waste production and increases in biodiversity in school grounds. This includes the development of a resource management plan for energy, waste and water and the improvement of school grounds and local biodiversity, broad curriculum development and engagement with regional agencies and resources.

Most importantly, *Kinship with the Earth* provides schools and their communities with a sense of hope for a positive and sustainable future and a celebration of God's creation through Catholic Identity and learning.

*Kinship with the Earth* is aligned to the National Environmental Education Statement through ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic.

*"To look at this kind of creation out here and not believe in God is to me impossible..."*

Discovery Space Shuttle - Astronaut John Glenn November 1, 1998







# The Relationship of Kinship with the Earth and ResourceSmart AuSSi Vic

Catholic Education Sandhurst has been involved with the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) since its involvement in the state pilot in 2001. Sandhurst made an early commitment to having all schools undertake the strategic planning components of the program and giving support to teachers who are developing sustainability themes and projects at their schools.

As a co-contributor to the AuSSI framework, Sandhurst schools participate fully in the state program with all processes, structures and outcomes being consistent with the state framework. As a development of the AuSSI framework that includes Catholic Identity and stewardship, *Kinship with the Earth* is directly aligned with ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic.





# Schools

## Making the Vision A Reality

Schools can lead society in demonstrating effective approaches to tackling climate change and other sustainability issues. In many cases, this is already occurring as schools take on whole of organisation responses to sustainability with very impressive results.

Catholic schools have a particular opportunity to engage in the development of hope and proactive response to major climate and sustainability issues. The stewardship and kinship of the natural and human world as outlined in the scriptures and long held traditions of the Catholic church leave the Catholic mission in a prime position to aid community and in particular youth, to make a positive contribution to the human story.

Contemporary sustainability practice in schools has been born from a long held consideration of the impact of human development on the natural or ecological systems of our planet. The origins of what we now know as environmental education started with these global concerns over 30 years ago and formed what is typically called the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development or ESD. In parallel to these ecological principles, social justice has been a prime element of world wide social, political and educative movements to tackle the fair distribution of global resources as well as the protection of natural environments. The contemporary climate change debate was started within these contexts during the mid 70's.







# The Big Picture of Sustainability - Why Schools Are A Good Place to Start

The need for whole of school and whole community engagement with sustainability including social, economic and environmental issues is evident when faced with such global issues as climate change, water shortage, rising cost of resources and the direct impact of human activity on the ecosystem. Within Catholic Mission, this also includes social justice, indigenous perspective and the call for Christian stewardship of God's creation.

There are many interpretations, approaches to practice and base principles for Education for Sustainability (EfS). EfS can easily be seen as ~

- Education **about** the environment  
Focuses on students' understanding of important facts, concepts and theories.
- Education **in** the environment  
Involves students in direct contact with the natural world to develop awareness, affinity and care for the environment.
- Education **for** the environment  
Aims to promote a willingness and ability to adopt life styles that are compatible with the wise use of environmental resources and minimising impacts on the natural and social world.



## Principles of Education for Sustainability

Education for sustainability is based on the following principles:

### **Transformation and change**

Education for sustainability is not simply about providing information but involves equipping people with the skills, capacity and motivation to plan and manage change towards sustainability within an organisation, industry or community.

### **Education for all and lifelong learning**

is driven by a broad understanding of education and learning that includes people of all ages and backgrounds and at all stages of life and takes place within all possible learning spaces, formal and informal, in schools, workplaces, homes and communities.

### **Systems thinking**

aims to equip people to understand connections between environmental, economic, social and political systems.

### **Envisioning a better future**

engages people in developing a shared vision for a sustainable future.

### **Critical thinking and reflection**

values the capacity of individuals and groups to reflect on personal experiences and world views and to challenge accepted ways of interpreting and engaging with the world.

### **Participation**

recognises participation as critical for engaging groups and individuals in sustainability.

### **Partnerships for change**

focuses on the use of genuine partnerships to build networks and relationships, and improve communication between different sectors of society.

### **Relationships with the natural world**

students need to experience the natural environment if they are to love it and care for it.

*Source: Living Sustainably: The Australian Government's Action Plan for Education for Sustainability 2009*





## A Sustainable School

A sustainable school is a school which has undertaken a deliberate strategic 'whole of school' approach to the design, development and continuance of Education for Sustainability and therefore sustainable practices.

*Educating for a Sustainable Future: A National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools (2005)* refers to this process as a dynamic framework for environmental education for sustainability.

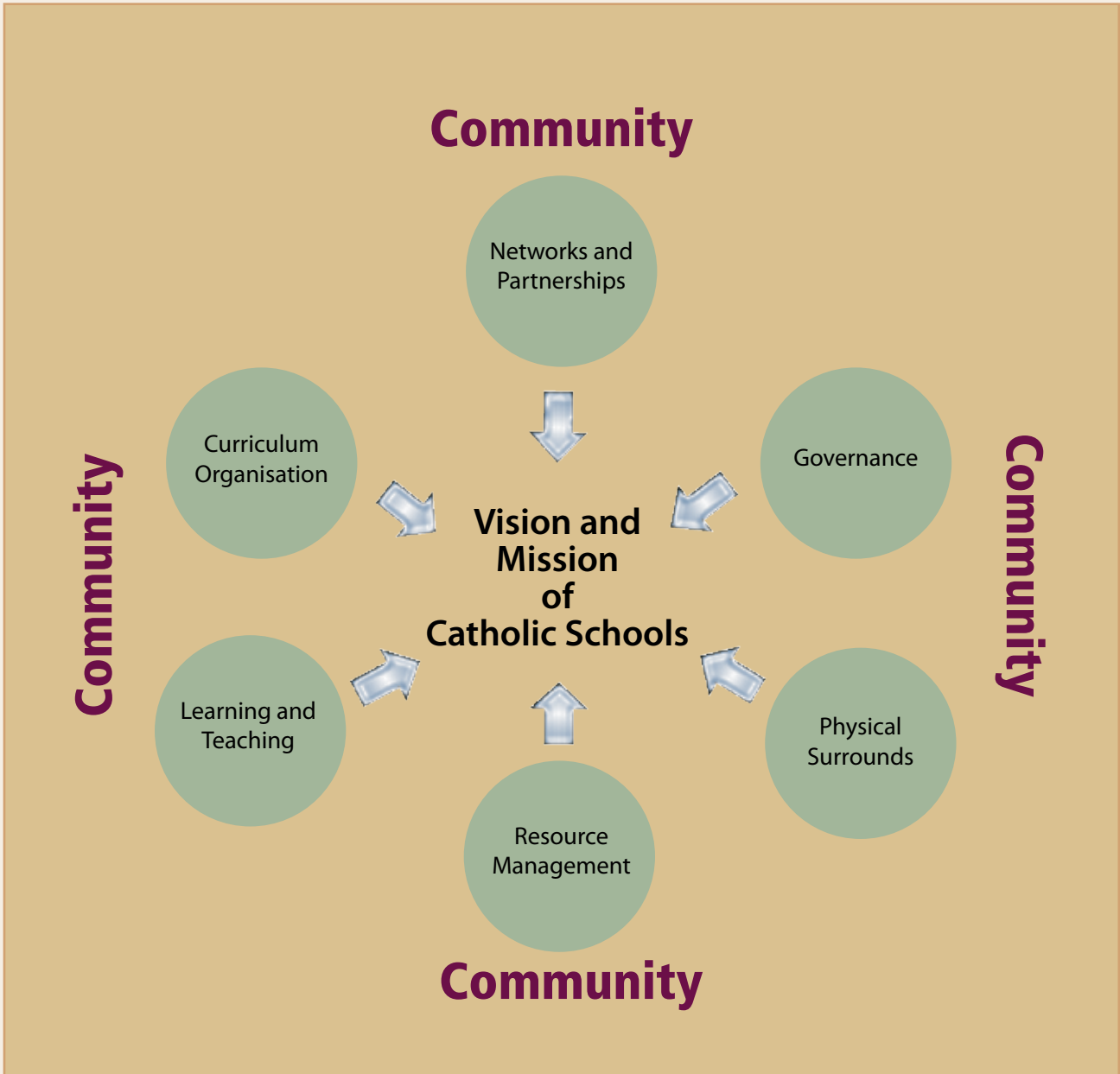
Creation of a sustainable future is an essential response to the current state of the world's ecosystems. 'Sustainability' acknowledges the economic, social and political pressures that can inhibit or support the capacity of individuals, communities or the nation to properly care for the environment. Sustainability also seeks to promote the stewardship of the environment, encouraging everyone to assume the responsibility of being a caretaker or custodian of the environment. Indigenous Australian's have much to offer in the development of this sense of stewardship. The nature of the Indigenous relationship with the environment provides many examples of sustainable use of the limited resources of the Australian landscape.

Holistic environmental stewardship is already being achieved by some school communities that have transformed their thinking and their immediate environment. These schools are creating a sustainable future for themselves and the broader community.

***National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools: Educating for a Sustainable Future  
DEH 2005***



# A Framework for Sustainability



*Adapted from: National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools: Educating for a Sustainable Future. DEH 2005*





# Key Elements To The Delivery of Education for Sustainability in Schools

## Learning and Teaching

*What has sustainability got to do with learning and teaching in the Catholic Education context?*

Education for Sustainability involves approaches to learning and teaching that integrate goals for conservation, social justice, cultural diversity, appropriate development and democracy into a vision and a mission of personal and social change. This involves developing the kinds of civic values and skills that empower all citizens to be leaders in the transition to a sustainable future.

The long-term goals of education for sustainability include developing the capacities of students to:

- understand and value the interdependence of religious, social, cultural, economic and ecological dimensions at local, national and global levels;
- reflect critically upon how this interdependence affects communities, workplaces, families and individuals and be able to make appropriate decisions and develop attitudes and skills which are conducive to the achievement of a sustainable future;
- appreciate and respect the intrinsic value of the whole environment and a sense of the sacred;
- develop an ethic of personal responsibility and stewardship towards all aspects of the environment;
- participate as active and involved citizens in building a sustainable future.

*National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools: Educating for a Sustainable Future. DEH 2005*



## **Education about, in and for the environment**

When considering learning and teaching approaches to sustainability education in schools student's understanding will be heightened if consideration is made of education about, in and for the environment and the following learning and teaching approaches can aid in this process:

- Action Based Learning or transference of learning into action is well proven to deepen the learning
- Problem or Inquiry Based Learning is a valuable learning and teaching approach to employ in Education for Sustainability, with an emphasis on exploratory learning.
- Science in Process context of hypothesising, trying out your idea, monitoring and evaluating what happens with celebration of failure and focus on the what has been learnt, and what would you do differently next time.
- Ecological or whole systems approach learning - nothing operates in isolation (Sterling)
- Through-lines or Lines of discovery that allow learning that generates new questions and new areas for exploration.
- Consideration of the 'hand, head, heart' approach is valuable, ie:
  - heart: what do you want to do - aspirations
  - head: how do we get there – planning
  - hands: let's do it - action
  - meditation, reflection, prayer and liturgy

## **Schools as Community Educators**

Schools can play a pivotal role in creating sustainable communities. Education is about preparing students for living and prospering in the real world, education cannot exist in isolation from the world. Hence schools have a responsibility to seek meaningful connections with the broader community. While the core business of schools is the education of its students, schools can actually move beyond this in an Education for Sustainability context either directly via their students or via specific community education activities to support the community's movement towards sustainability.

Opportunities that exist within this context include:

- Using schools, both indoors and outdoors, as a learning and action demonstration centre for the community providing great case studies for infrastructure and operational/systems initiatives
- Schools as demonstrations of behaviour change
- Schools as leaders to other schools, parishes or the broader community of achieving coordinated sustainability outcomes





## Professional Learning

The technologies and understandings of sustainability are continually updating while alongside this are fast evolving and developing Education for Sustainability programs and practices in schools. In ensuring that schools keep up to date with the information, receive support and continue to get inspired about their school's efforts, a consistent and committed approach to professional learning is needed. Some considerations:

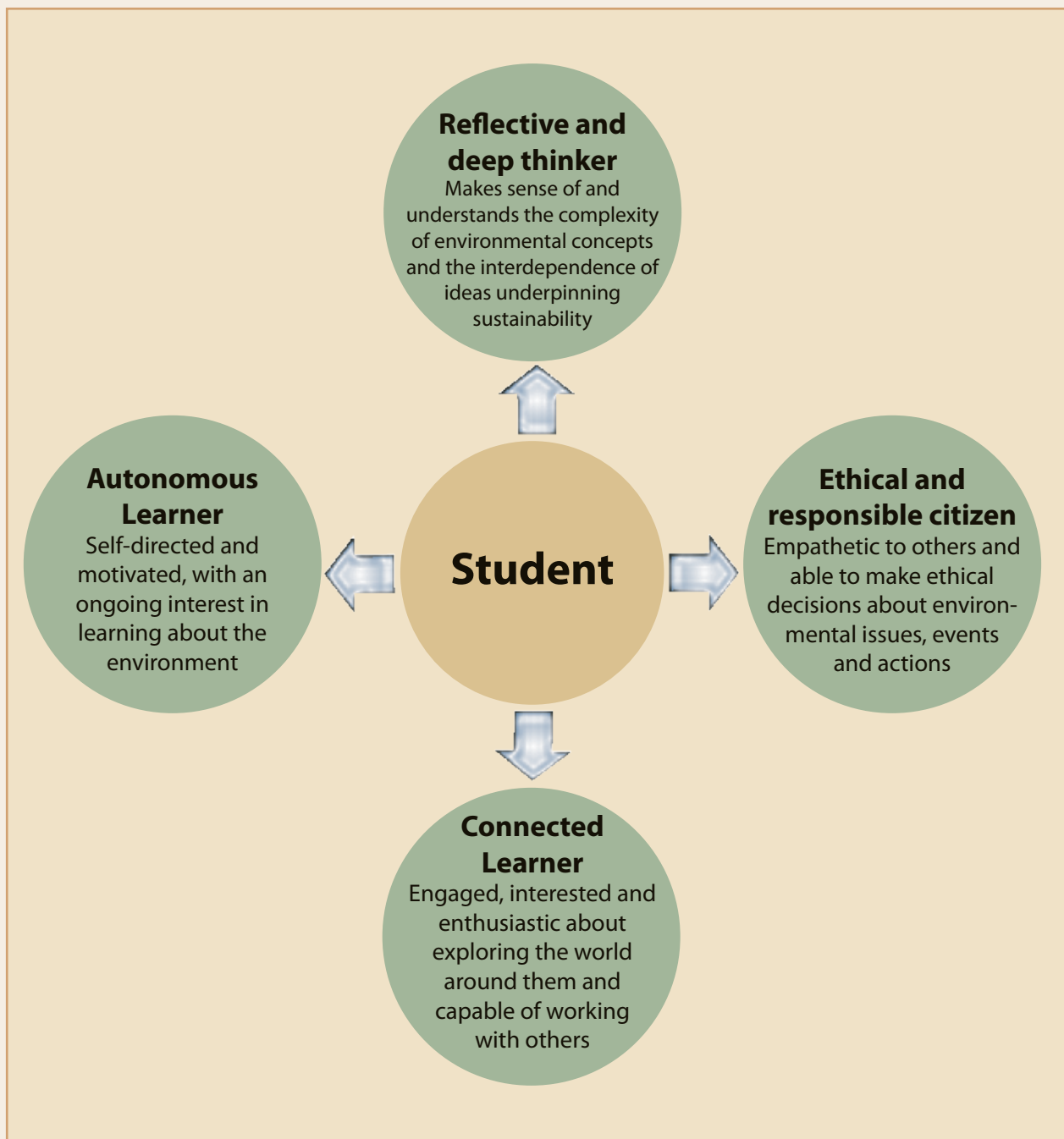
- The approach to professional learning needs to be a long-term process implemented to get people moving from Awakening through to Leading, Phases of ResourceSmart AuSSi Vic (Refer to Page 62 ResourceSmart AuSSi Vic 5 Star Certification)
- Learning and teaching of sustainability across the whole school curriculum can tie with Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT) or teaching quality
- Sustainability focused Professional learning can unlock an abundance of valuable teaching tools and ideas to help teachers develop VELs, AusVELs and to explore thematic approaches to learning
- Conferencing and networking with others - building a community
- Professional Reading
- Keep the passion alive for environmental teachers

## Students

Extensive opportunities for developing sustainable practices now and into the future can be explored via empowerment of the student body. Particular student involvement worth activating includes:

- Involvement in managing and monitoring systems
- Involvement of Student Action Teams in collection of data, action planning and project delivery
- Student democratic and political processes
- Transferring of experience, skills and knowledge to home and community contexts
- Creation of student networks within and across regions and sectors





*The four dimensions of an environmental learner (adapted from the Productive Pedagogies, Education Queensland) 2004*

# Curriculum Organisation

*What are the opportunities for curriculum development in embracing a sustainability in schools approach?*

There are limitless opportunities within school curriculum structures to explore Education for Sustainability and engage students in challenging, exploratory learning approaches. Learning and teaching for sustainability can be reflected and can link across all areas of the curriculum and school experience. Sustainability projects and thematic approaches aid directly in the development of outcomes for the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) framework. ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic in particular, as an approach to sustainability in schools, has been deliberately organised to support VELS, AusVELS and the development of Principles of Learning and Teaching.

Using a whole of school approach to sustainability during the planning phase also gives great scope for curriculum development around collection of baseline data, design and delivery of projects and once again student action teaming and democracy. It also gives teachers the opportunity to plan professional learning and integrated curriculum responses. The school buildings, infrastructure and social organisation lend countless opportunities for curriculum context and content. School events such as rubbish free and car free days also aid in the embedding of sustainability in school practice.

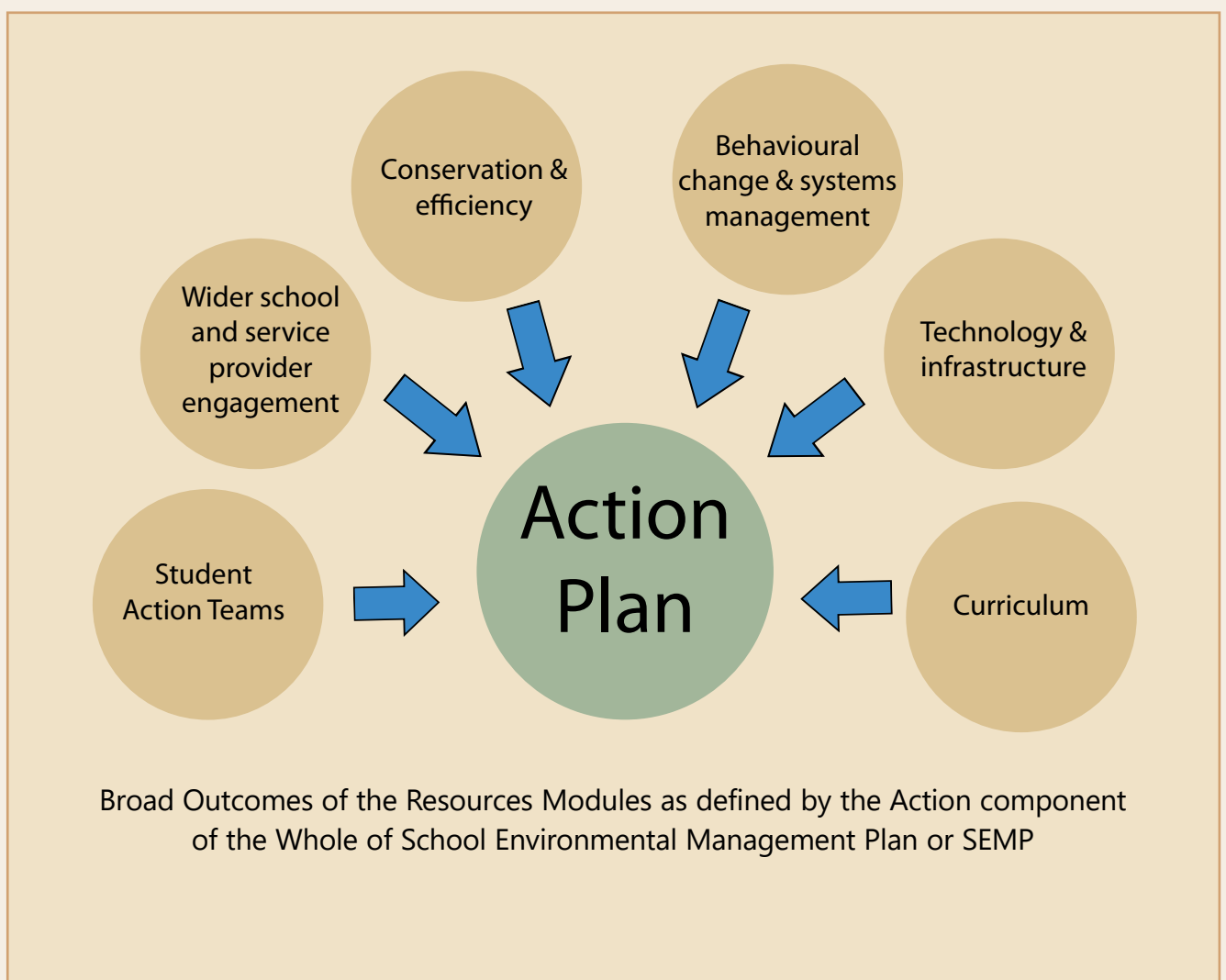
Key concepts and themes of Education for Sustainability			
Ecological sustainability	Social sustainability	Economic sustainability	Political sustainability
Biodiversity	Basic human needs	Cost-benefit analysis	Citizenship
Habitat	Cultural diversity	Economic development	Democracy
Carrying capacity	Cultural heritage	Eco-efficiency	Decision making
Conservation	Human rights	Life cycle analysis	Tolerance
Ecological footprint	Intergenerational equity	Natural capital	Power
Ecology	Participation	Natural resource accounting	Respect
Ecospace	Peace		Conflict resolution
Ecosystems	Risk management	Steady-state economy	
Interspecies equity	Social justice	Sustainable consumption	
Natural cycles and systems		Sustainable production	
		Triple bottom line	

*National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools: Educating for a Sustainable Future. DEH 2005*





The VELS, AusVELS framework is underpinned strongly with sustainability contexts. Sustainability is an excellent vehicle to develop themes and content for domains and learning focus. Many school program providers from the environment/sustainability sector have specific VELS, AusVELS outcomes programs as well as detailed descriptions of how activities relate to VELS, AusVELS outcomes. Educators are encouraged to make use of external program providers wherever possible.





# Resource Management

*What are the benefits of sustainable resource management in Catholic Schools?*

Schools are major users of resources. Not only is resource management a great approach for learning and teaching but it is also an important method for reducing school operating costs. In fact, the ability for us to manage resources effectively and consciously is the biggest key action in securing a sustainable future.

## Data

In order to capture a snapshot of your school's resource use and usage patterns as well as a method to monitor progress, develop systems and motivate continued improvement, the collection and interpretation of data is unquestionably valuable:

- Baseline data collection is imperative, followed by the establishment of monitoring systems, eg: School Environmental Tracking System (SETS).
- Data to be collected and monitored across areas of waste, energy, water management and school grounds development
- Reduction targets should be set, eg: through ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic. Schools should recognise value in targeting significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions as the target.
- Work through the ecological footprint to measure your school and school community's impact.
- Undertake a Biodiversity, Energy, Water, Waste Curriculum Audit



## Systems and procedures

The establishment of systems and procedures is fundamental to the delivery of sustainability programs for lasting behaviour change and genuine sustainability outcomes. Approaches should include:

- **Whole of school approach to be taken with planning & action**
- **Key behaviour and management change approaches include:**
  - Waste management systems, reduction of materials to landfill and green procurement including contexts of finite nature of resources and reduction of unnecessary waste
  - Energy management systems including shut down/switch off procedures, carbon management, infrastructure/technology, reduction of unnecessary waste
  - Water management systems including rain water harvesting, storm water quality, flow restrictors and eradication of leaks
  - School grounds enhancement including school grounds planning, protection of remnant vegetation, learnscaping and habitat creation.
- **Key policy and management considerations:**
  - Purchasing/procurement policy is an important element of the reduction approach
  - Whole of School - School Environmental Management Plans (SEMP) are fundamental to the success of sustainability and resource management in schools
  - Task Force committees (including management, teachers, students and parents) must be established in order to ensure ongoing action
  - Money saved in efficiency measures to be reinvested into further sustainability actions
  - Communications planning







# Physical Surrounds

*Should Catholic schools develop a physical resource that is an active part of learning in the environment for their students as well as an exemplar of sustainable practices?*

Engaging schools and school communities in the natural environment is commonly understood to trigger behaviour change towards sustainability. School grounds are a canvas ready to be explored and developed in support of Education for Sustainability programs and projects.

## Maximising natural environment

Whatever the context of the school grounds (including asphalt) there are opportunities to enhance the available natural assets:

- Emphasise the value of creating habitat and rich biodiversity in support of a wide range of species
- Make a conscious effort to create natural environments and green space in urban settings
- School grounds can contribute to reinvigorating the denuded landscapes they sit within
- Create a physical environment that feels like it's driven by wise resource management, an environment that considers natural ecological systems
- A natural environment within schoolgrounds can invigorate the senses of students and teachers alike, genuinely contributing to the creation of a positive, joyful and productive school community
- Create a nature corridor and food source for local wildlife





## **Educational Value of Schoolgrounds**

The schoolgrounds can also take on a strong role in their educative value by structuring physical and built spaces using the areas outside of classrooms:

- Instead of landscaping your schoolground, think about learnscaping it or how can you draw the educational value and opportunity out of your immediate outdoor environment
- Undertake the schoolground design with the students by using a design process that takes into consideration every nook and cranny as a rich learning experience
- Include interpretation material in your schoolyard about the history of the area, the local species, scientific facts or the installation of art works. Students can develop this material themselves and help to build a fascinating learnscape
- Consider your schoolgrounds as an outdoor classroom and then explore how what was once a 'yard' can actually add numerous new 'classrooms' to your school
- Engage with the environment in the curriculum and re-engage your students with the natural world. Take the students (and teachers) outside and explore the world in which they live

## **Schoolgrounds design/layout**

Thoughtful design can turn the school yard into an extraordinary educational opportunity.

Consider including:

- Reflective areas and meeting places
- Waterwise and indigenous plantings
- Aboriginal land use
- Student driven design by asking them what they want
- Curriculum driven design
- Use of symbols in schools such as message sticks/artwork
- Permaculture zonings
- Vegetable gardens
- Historical precincts

For students to learn in the environment they must start with their local landscapes. The sustainable projects they develop through their enquiries will begin in their own local environment. The beautification and maintenance of the school grounds allows students the chance to appreciate their environment as well as providing an alternative and effective 'learnscape'.



# Governance

*Should Catholic Schools develop management structures that promote Education for Sustainability?*

"Schools should develop management structures that help them maximise their use of physical and human resources in a manner which is economically, ecologically and socially sustainable."

*Page 11: National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools: Educating for a Sustainable Future. DEH 2005*

"Catholic educators have a critical role to play in promoting the Church's call to "ecological conversion" which finds its ground in our faith."

"As well as recognising the moral and spiritual dimensions, it makes good economic sense to carefully examine our use of water, energy and the potential for recycling and waste management."

*Catholic Earthcare Australia*

## School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP)

A key to the success of sustainability education programs in schools is the development of whole school plans.

- Develop a Whole of School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP), the national approach referenced in the AuSSI framework.
- That the SEMP is a tool for schools in planning for ongoing stewardship of the earth
- Planned reviews and reprioritising of actions within the SEMP establishment
- That the SEMP clearly addresses:
  - Systems, actions and targets for resource management (water, energy, waste, biodiversity/schoolgrounds)
  - Purchasing policy
  - Curriculum approaches
  - School community engagement
  - Service to others
  - School prayer and ritual





## Triple Bottom Line/Accountability Economic Social Environmental Educational

Triple Bottom Line thinking is a global approach to assessing an organisation's outcomes with the view of encouraging organisations to be responsible for good Economic Management, Social Capacity Building and Environmental Protection. Schools of course can add a fourth pillar of Education

**Economic**

**Social**

**Environmental**

**Educational**

Sustainability in schools will greatly benefit if schools take note of this **quadruple** bottom line approach to planning.



Outcomes of the Core Module as defined by the strategic component of the Whole of School Environmental Management Plan or SEMP - ResourceSmart AuSSI-Vic



## **Inter-School Collaboration**

Sharing experiences between schools can not only help each other learn but also, ultimately, build much greater collective outcomes as resources and ideas are shared. Schools should encourage:

- Cluster approaches – small groups of schools can develop and share curriculum, projects and resources
- Networking – opportunities for broader interaction to share stories and build contacts
- Support for young teachers and sustainability coordinators
- Professional learning – schools actively teaching other schools about their journey and learning

## **Community Leadership**

Schools also have a timely opportunity to lead their communities in the journey towards sustainability. For many Catholic schools in regional Victoria, the school and church may be the strongest community asset. If schools firstly recognise that they can be the experts in the community, this can lead to:

- Continual demonstration of the practices and systems associated with wise resource use
- Opening of their doors to wide collaboration in order to share organisations' expertise and resources
- The schools sector as a whole demonstrating community leadership





# Networks and Partnerships

*Should Catholic schools develop effective partnerships in the local and wider community that promotes Education for Sustainability?*

In order to provide a curriculum that promotes effective programs for learning in, for and about the environment, schools need to create partnerships within the community and external service providers so that they have access to the resources and expertise that is available. Involving community groups encourages schools to take action not only within the school itself but also within families, the wider local and possibly, global community.

## Community Support

In order to build the capacity of schools to deliver sustainability education programs, there are great resources existing within the community and that great benefit can be harnessed from the range of support available. Schools can:

- Link with industry and business
- Link with faith/church organisations and individuals
- Promote schools as genuine participants in community development and capacity building, not just community members
- Engage with a diverse range of community stakeholders, eg: faith community, local government, 'friends' groups, parents, school contractors, Parks Victoria, Early Childhood centres, Local Traders, tradesmen, farmers, State Government agencies, Non Government Organisations.







## **Whole School Engagement**

When establishing governance structures successful schools ensure that whole school engagement forms the foundation of their planning:

- Sustainability will not be achieved by only activating the 'green-fringe' nor by direction from the school's leadership team. Sustainability is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- Activating the student body will add great value to the success of school sustainability programs, via emphasis on developing student democracy and provision of opportunities to explore leadership
- It is important to engage across management, not just the leadership team or the conservationists, but the curriculum and facilities teams, school support staff, specialist teaching staff, School Board, Parents and Friends groups, Local Government, Non Government Organisations and community groups

## **School Community Engagement and Communication**

In order to maximise the potential reach of sustainability programs to activate in-school behaviour change and broader community education, there are several key considerations to be made:

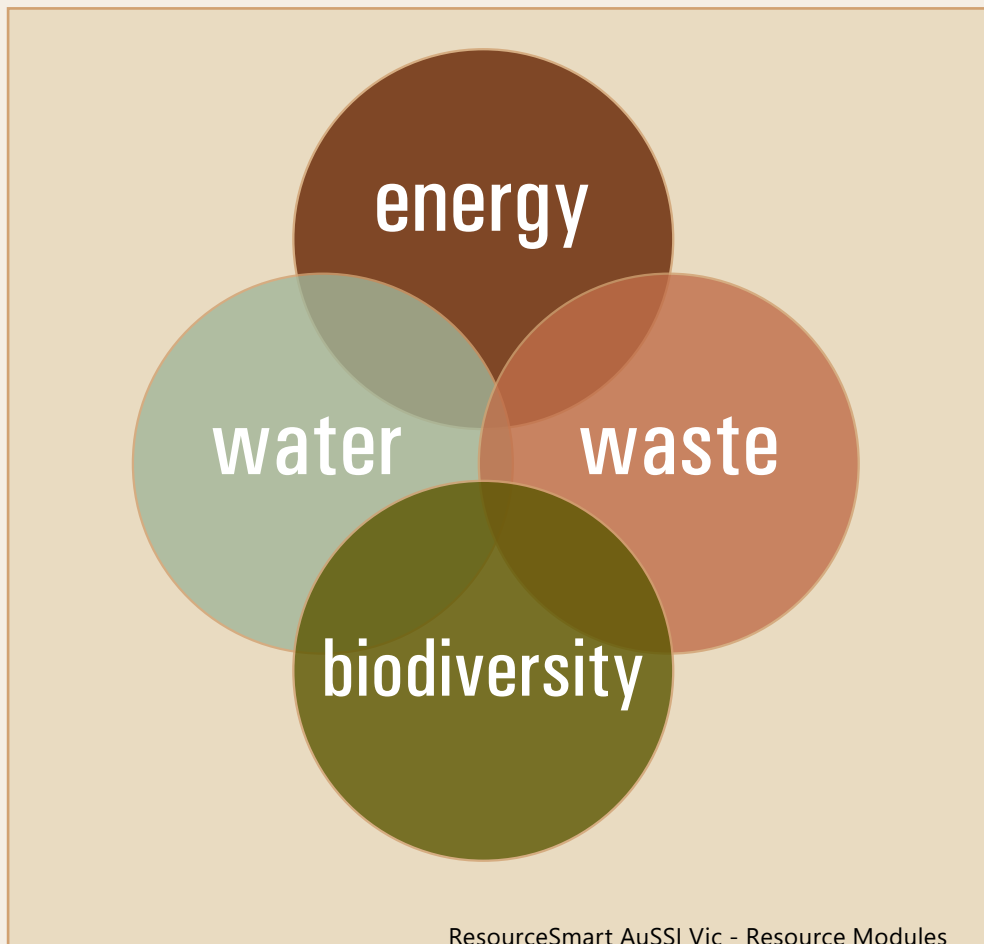
- Valuable cross-fertilisation of ideas, learning and joint ventures can occur between schools and the broader community with benefits flowing both ways. In cases of schools ready to show leadership, schools can act as the hub for such broad-reaching community education
- There is great opportunity to inspire and motivate the broader community via the celebration of schools achievements (eg: awards, certification, signage, media coverage, reporting on good behaviour and systems theory). Development of a communications plan is an effective means to engage the broader community to reinforce, affirm and celebrate sustainability achievements
- The wider community has a responsibility in educating children as citizens. Involvement by community and civic groups in helping schools in sustainability projects and fostering partnerships with schools in civic based projects helps all community members to take the responsibility to build a positive future



## Promotion and Celebration

One often forgotten ingredient in Education for Sustainability is that of celebration and telling people of your journey, learning and successes:

- Celebrate your achievements big or small
- Plan and celebrate through prayers and liturgies
- Promote through newsletters, community groups, local media and school website
- Get your students and teachers to tell others (in your school and further afield) about what they are doing
- Enter competitions and awards
- Create sustainability champions in your school and community
- Engage a student leadership team and then engage the whole student body
- A communications plan will greatly assist in ensuring that sustainability achievements are celebrated



## A Whole School Approach



Taking the elements of the National Environmental Education Statement (NEES) from the previous pages of this section, the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic framework has arranged them into three aggregate categories:

- **School Organisation** – Resource Management, Physical Surrounds & School Grounds and Governance
- **Curriculum** – Learning and Teaching and Curriculum Organisation
- **Community Engagement** – Networks and Partnerships and Governance





# Making the Connections

## Caritas and the UN Millennium Plan

As an agency, Caritas Australia maintains a commitment to achieving The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through its projects. These eight goals are a global blueprint for breaking the chains of poverty. Although significant progress has been made on the goals, there are still one billion people living on less than US\$1 per day, and more than 820 million people going to bed hungry every single night. The international community must act now to ensure the MDGs are met by 2015.

In particular, Goal 7 of the MDG has significance to Education for Sustainability.

### Goal 7 - Ensure Environmental Sustainability

There is a growing awareness of Climate Change and concern for our earth in mainstream society. We are gradually realising that our actions (and inaction) influence climate change. Poor communities are among the most vulnerable to negative effects caused by climate change, such as rising sea levels.

Australia is the greatest emitter of greenhouse gases per capita. We all have a responsibility to ensure we walk lightly on the earth. As we use up finite resources, we impact on the access of others to those same resources. In this way climate change is a rights issue.

As a consequence of climate change, basic rights are being violated. Rights, such as the right to life (and livelihood); the right to liberty of movement as set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the right to an adequate standard of living (including housing) as is set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Caritas Australia advocates for change, including the way in which we look after our environment. They also support development programs with an emphasis on sustainable initiatives, including sustainable agriculture.

### Project Compassion

Caritas Australia invites guests from our partner countries to visit Australia each Lent to speak to us about Caritas development programs in their country. Project Compassion is the main way Caritas Australia raises money. Every Catholic school, every Catholic parish and all Australians are invited to be part of the Project Compassion campaign each Lent.



## **Creating change**

Caritas Australia has education and advocacy programs within Australia, working to help Australians become aware of the causes of injustice and poverty and encouraging people to take action. They take up these issues in recognition of the structural impediments to people breaking free from the cycle of poverty.

## **Stewardship of the Earth's Resources**

Caritas Australia will work for the integrity of creation in ways which assist the world's poorest communities to have access to a greater share of resources, encouraging sustainability and equity, and respect for the environment.

Caritas Australia is committed to the United Nation's eight Millennium Development Goals – which aim to halve world poverty by 2015. Goal 7 aims to Ensure Environmental Sustainability. Caritas Australia is also committed to good stewardship of the earth's resources as a principle of Catholic Social Teaching. Good stewardship aims to give the world's poorest communities access to a greater share of natural resources - and encourage sustainability and equity. By caring for our earth, we are caring for all people.

Source: Caritas Australia

For more information: [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au)

## **The Millennium Development Goals**

- 1 Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
- 2 Achive Universal Primary Education
- 3 Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
- 4 Reduce Child Mortality
- 5 Improve Maternal Health
- 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases
- 7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- 8 Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Source: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)



# Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative Victoria - ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic

As part of the national program, Victoria has developed a strategic planning framework for all schools referred to as ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic. This framework provides a holistic approach to sustainability. It integrates educational, environmental, social and economic outcomes so that schools do not see each area in isolation but as components of the bigger picture of sustainability.

ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic is the single call-to-action for all Victorians to conserve energy, materials and water – at home, at work, at school and out and about. It will also deliver practical advice Victorians need to make the necessary changes in their lives to become ResourceSmart.

## The ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic Framework

ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic is a customised program of five modules that schools complete at their own pace:

The Framework consists of :

**Core module:** Strategic Planning

**Resource modules:** Action and Projects

**Biodiversity** - developing indigenous gardens that attract native butterflies and birds, developing theme and curriculum based gardens and habitats and developing watering systems.

**Energy** - energy conservation, renewable energy, air quality and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions;

**Water** - water conservation and storm water management;

**Waste** - waste/ litter minimisation and recycling;

Depending on the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic modules completed, schools will focus on aiming to achieve the aspirational reduction targets and reaching the best practice benchmarks (per student per year, prim/sec) listed below:

- Reduce waste to landfill by 70%, aim for 0.3m<sup>3</sup>/student/ year
- Reduce water use by 40%, aim for 4KL/student/year
- Reduce energy use by 25%, aim for 250/400 KWh /student/yr
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80%, aim for 0.4/0.6 T CO<sub>2</sub> /student/yr
- Increase habitat by 50% on or off site (locality)
- Reduce weeds by 60%



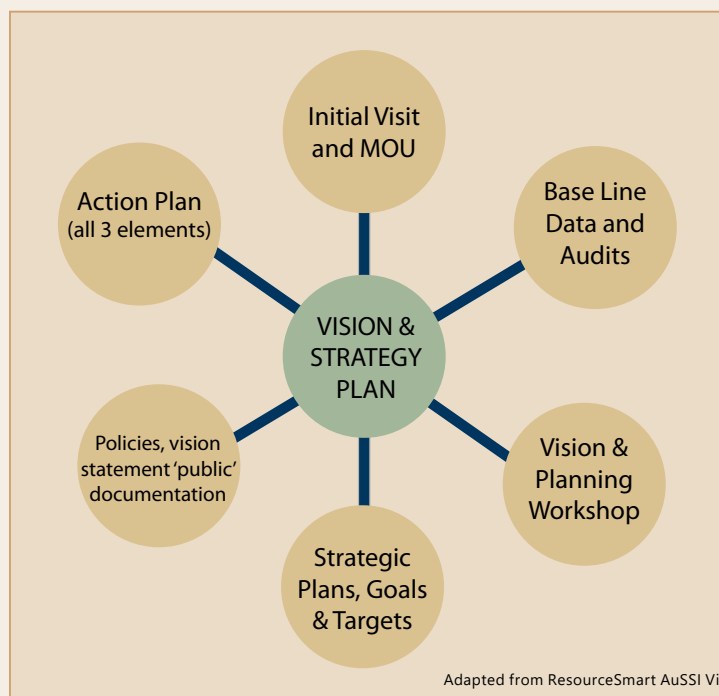
## Core Module

The core module is an important step for the development of Education for Sustainability (EfS) and sustainability practice in schools. This module is often referred to as the planning and strategic process for the whole school approach to sustainability. Typically this module includes:

- The collection of baseline data and resource use (a snapshot of the current state of school);
- An outline of opportunities for improvement and recognition of prior achievements;
- Stimulating professional learning for teachers about the direction and purpose of education for sustainability and strategies to develop an overall long-term plan for sustainability for the school;
- A visioning process for school staff and active school community participants;
- The development of a School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP);
- The setting of goals and targets for each resource module;
- The development of an action plan for all resource modules, covering the 3 areas of: school organisation/operations, curriculum and wider school community engagement;
- Creation of a sustainability policy to support Education for Sustainability (EfS) and sustainability practice.

Outcomes of the SEMP process

- clear Learning & Teaching objectives
- integration with other school management and strategic plans
- short and long term goals stated with clear targets
- integrated action planning





## Resource Modules

Following the completion of the Core Module, schools have a set of strategic documents and action plans that allows them to map their way to sustainable practices. Please note, the Core Module is designed to be an integral part of your school's Strategic Planning process in order to set the 5 year Strategic Plan.

The Resources Modules are the action components of the SEMP which is created in the Core Module. This is typically where students and teachers are involved in school projects and curriculum that supports the sustainability plan of the school which is designed to explore the *for, in and about* the environment contexts. Typically, this involves a very rich spectrum of activities and project outcomes, focusing on Operations, Curriculum and Whole School Community Links.

The modules have been tagged with a single descriptor for ease. However, it is very important to place the theme well within the three Education for Sustainability (EfS) outcomes i.e. for, in and about the environment.







## **Biodiversity Module:**

### **Biodiversity, School Grounds Development, Landcare**

The Biodiversity module of ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic assists schools to achieve the following measurable outcomes:

- Increase habitat by 50% on or off site (locality)
- Reduce weeds by 60%

### **The Biodiversity Module has four main themes:**

#### **1. Conservation of land and ecology as a precious resource and natural asset.**

- protection of biodiversity in local areas
- restoring of natural and ecological systems
- enhancing opportunities for bio-diverse ecological communities
- sustainable farming and land management

#### **2. Land and bush care**

- the reduction of weeds and destructive species
- protection of remnant bush
- restoration of waterways
- restoration of land
- protection of endangered species, and ecological communities
- soil building







### 3. Ecology and Habitat

- construction of habitat for indigenous plants and animals
- projects in the discovery of food webs, natural systems and eco-systems
- rodent and pest proofing
- protection of plants and animals

### 4. School Ground Development

The development of school grounds as:

- habitat corridors
- haven habitats for indigenous plants and animals
- outdoor learning spaces for students and community





## **Energy Module:**

### **Energy Conservation, Air Quality Improvement, Greenhouse Gas Reduction**

The Energy module of ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic assists schools to achieve the following measurable outcomes:

- Reduce energy use by 25%, aim for 250/ 400 KWh /student/yr
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80%, aim for 0.4/ 0.6 T CO<sub>2</sub> /student/yr

### **The Energy module has three main themes:**

#### **1. Conservation of energy.**

- electricity and gas consumption reduction
- installation/ retrofitting of reduction and efficiency devices
- better behavioural management of energy in classrooms, staff rooms and school grounds
- building design
- renewable energy infrastructure

#### **2. Air Quality.**

- air quality monitoring
- weather and climate monitoring
- Ecological Footprint calculation
- reduction of vehicle use
- active reduction behaviour

#### **3. Greenhouse Reduction.**

- reduction of the greenhouse emission signature of the school
- reduction processes for homes
- infrastructure and retrofitting
- carbon neutral schools
- transport planning & strategy



## **Water Module:**

### **Water Conservation, Storm Water & River Health**

The Water module of ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic assists schools to achieve the following measurable outcome:

- Reduce water use by 40%, aim for 4KL /student/ year

#### **The Water module has three main themes:**

##### **1. Conservation of water as a precious resource and natural asset.**

- leak reduction
- installation of low flow and efficiency devices
- better behavioural management of water in classrooms, staff rooms and school grounds

##### **2. Storm water quality and management.**

- maintenance of storm water pipes & pits
- capture of water for down cycling, eg. water tank to toilet system
- soil health and water retention (in garden beds, bio-retention and wetland systems)

##### **3. River Health, water way protection and Coast Care.**

- understanding, stewardship and management of local waterways
- whole water cycle contexts (including coastal systems)
- aquatic (salt and fresh water) ecology and habitat
- pollution
- quality control







## Waste Module:

### Waste & Litter Reduction, Green Procurement

The Waste module of ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic assists schools to achieve the following measurable outcome:

- Reduce waste to landfill by 70%, aim for 0.3m<sup>3</sup>/ student/ year

### The Waste module has five main themes:

#### 1. Reduction of resource use

- paper use
- cardboard and packaging
- consumables (Office, ICT and catering)
- rubbish free lunches
- toxic materials and products
- use of disposable cutlery/crockery and plastics

#### 2. Reuse of materials

- establishment of reuse systems eg. paper, containers, ink cartridges, clothing etc
- ICT/technology equipment
- school furniture

#### 3. Recycling

- diversion of recyclable materials from land fill eg. paper, cardboard, cans
- corks, clothing, fluorescent lamps, cartridges etc
- ICT/technology equipment
- organics





#### 4. Green Procurement and Materials

- recycled content products
- non toxic products
- organic products
- biodegradable products
- recyclable products
- reusable products
- products that can be easily recycled
- Whole of Life Cycle/Cradle to Cradle sensitive products
- fair trade products
- cleaning; and
- canteen purchasing

#### 5. Litter control

- reduction of packaging entering school grounds
- litter collection in school grounds and surrounds
- bird and rodent proofing bin systems
- reduction of litter in waterways





## ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic 5 Star Certification

The ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic 5 Star Certification Scheme recognises good sustainability practices and rewards high achievement and leadership.

The new certification commenced in 2008. It replaces the existing Waste Wise and AuSSI Vic certification schemes.

5Star Sustainability Certification Descriptors (Summary)	
<b>Awakening</b> 	Core Module completed Baseline data established Entered baseline data in SETS
<b>Discovering</b> 	Maintained Core Two Resource Modules completed Demonstrated reduction in resource use from baseline and/or increased habitat quality Maintained SETS
<b>Transforming</b> 	Maintained Core Three Resource Modules completed Met and maintains the benchmark of two Resource Modules completed at Star2 Demonstrated reduction in resource use from baseline and/or increased habitat quality in the newly completed Module Maintained SETS Further practices completed
<b>Sustaining</b> 	Maintained Core Four Resource Modules completed Met and maintains the benchmark of the three Resource Modules completed at Star3 Demonstrated reduction in resource use from baseline and/or increased habitat quality in the newly completed Module Maintained SETS and reports results to the school Further practices completed
<b>Leadership</b> 	Maintained Core Completed all the Resource Modules Met or exceeded the benchmark and maintains it for all the Resource Modules Completed all the practices in the Certification Tools for each Resource Module Maintained SETS and reports results to the school community Has completed an integrated environmental strategic plan delivering ResourceSmart practices and curriculum Demonstrated student, staff and parent leadership that engaged the community Actively mentored other schools Provided documented evidence of community engagement Provided case study material





## Role Description for School Coordinators

The role of the school co-ordinator is a very important one in the smooth and effective implementation of the Sustainable Schools Program (SSP). The following is a quick guide to help schools understand what is involved in being a school Sustainability Coordinator.

The Sustainability Coordinator:

- Leads the school sustainability committee (Positive Futures task force)
- Aids in the completion of all ResourceSmart AuSSi Vic documentation
- Assists with grant applications
- Attends diocesan professional learning days
- Liaises with Sandhurst Education Officers
- Supervises the uploading of data into SETS (data entered by students)
- Promotes sustainability through curriculum development
- Keeps regular attention to newsletters and e-mail alerts
- Aids students' action to complete the school case study
- Supervises student reporting to the school board
- Keeps an enthusiastic eye on the School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and Sustainability Action Plan to ensure goals are being met
- Networks with other schools



# What Can Sandl



Propagation Programs



Litter Free Lunch Days



Carbon Management



Inquiry Based Learning



# Hurst Schools Do?



Caring for animals



Parent involvement



Engaging the Community



Landcare - out in the environment





## Professional Learning

Primarily *Kinship with the Earth* is a professional learning program for school staff. The mode of delivery focuses on professional development and in particular, arming teachers with skills and knowledge of Education for Sustainability principles, the environment and contemporary issues, resource management projects and leading practice learning and teaching. Catholic Education Sandhurst also provides a number of student workshops in which teachers can readily identify learning and teaching approaches that can be demonstrated in their own classrooms

There are a number of professional learning opportunities that are provided directly by the Sandhurst team, including full day programs, retreats, after school workshops and attendance at school planning days. *Kinship with the Earth* has given emphasis to the development of curriculum in schools including problem based learning, applied learning, student directed learning and critical questioning and throughlines.

Other service agencies offer a wide range of professional learning days. You will find these in the CERESly Sustainable Newsletter published by CERES Sustainability Team, Brunswick.

## Gathering on the Mount Sandhurst ResourceSmart Roadshows

Key features of the professional learning program for our Diocese are the Sandhurst ResourceSmart Roadshows and Gathering on the Mount Sustainability Conference. These are held at all three Catholic Education Offices, hosted at leading schools and as a conference at Feathertop Chalet, Harrietville. All school co-ordinators and principals are sent regular notification of these events. Success of your school program is greatly aided by regular attendance at these programs. Catholic Education Sandhurst will provide attending staff with a certificate of attendance to satisfy Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Professional Learning credit.

Sandhurst offers these professional learning opportunities to school staff from other Dioceses as well:

- Gathering on the Mount Sustainability Conference  
Feathertop Chalet, Harrietville. Held biannually.  
Keynote addresses, workshops and sustainability seminars.
- Sandhurst ResourceSmart Roadshows - held in fourth term each year in different schools and settings across the Diocese.  
Sustainability workshops supporting teachers to review SEMP's, monitor School Environment Tracking Systems and reprioritise actions.

***All events can be found in the Catholic Education Office Calendar***



## **Sandhurst Switches Off**

Catholic schools across the Sandhurst Diocese take positive action against global warming each year by switching off school lights for a full day. They join together in a combined effort to raise awareness about the effects of greenhouse gas emissions and to demonstrate how schools, homes and businesses can reduce their impact on the environment.

Sandhurst Switches Off is conducted during Catholic Education Week each year. In choosing to participate in "Sandhurst Switches Off", a day of action, Sandhurst schools demonstrate their commitment to preserving God's Earth by using the unique qualities they each have as stewards of our natural environment.

## **CECV Certificate III in Carbon Management**

*A Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Pathways and Transition Training Initiative in partnership with Sandhurst Catholic Education Office & Carbon Training International.*

The Certificate III in Carbon Management is an accredited workplace qualification for facilities management. Developing carbon management skills will enable teachers to recognise and support the operational improvements required within their organisation today.

This competency-based qualification provides students with the critical green skills needed to identify and capture energy efficiency improvements and reduce carbon emissions from organisational operations.

As a Certificate III in Carbon Management graduate, teachers will develop skills and competencies to enable them to contribute to and carry out local implementation of a whole of organisation carbon reduction strategy.

The Carbon Management pilot was conducted in 2011 involving teachers from eight secondary colleges. A further six staff completed the course in 2012. These teachers are now planning to deliver the Cert III in Carbon Management as a VET course in their schools. CECV has committed to running further programs over the next few years to ensure support is given to schools to better incorporate this course into their curriculum.



## Annual Conference Programs

There are a number of state wide conferences for environment and sustainability education held annually. Notably the following are well targeted and inspiring conference programs:

- Greening Australia's Toolbox for Change – generally held in March
- Victorian Association Environmental Education (VAEE) annual conference – usually held in August/September

The VAEE also offer a number of workshops across the year aimed at supporting schools and developing EfS curriculum. Membership rates are very cheap for schools and participation can count as VIT credit. More information can be found at [www.vaee.org.au](http://www.vaee.org.au)

Other workshops run by partners of Sandhurst will be advertised to each school through Communication Matters.

## Student Action Teams and Student Democracy

Student leadership, democracy and action teaming is perhaps a far more important element to school sustainability than direct classroom curriculum. One of the key literacys in need of developing for young people and sustainability lies in helping students employ the democratic process. This goes well beyond simply making an environment captain. More successful approaches include engaging students in the school task force or environment committee, helping students to arrange meetings and elections, creating roles and responsibilities for the management and development of sustainability practices and supporting students in their aspiration to affect a positive future. The learning and teaching opportunity, including rich task making, revolving around creating a campaign for change greatly aids behavioural change in a school community. Students are also encouraged to write their own vision and mission statement as part of the School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) process.

*Student Action Teams help create systems and learning of what needs to be done to secure a sustainable future.*

*Student Democracy creates learning and ability to know how and why things need to be done to create a sustainable future...*



*Student action  
teaming and  
student democracy  
are not synonymous  
but completely  
complementary!*



### *The Student Democracy Creed...*

*The bravest and most  
important thing is to  
imagine a better future,  
find your allies, share  
your tools, build your  
vision and start now.*

## *Student Democracy*

Selecting area for investigation/  
concern

1. Collecting of data
2. Formation and testing of assumptions
3. Research for detail, argument/angle and potential course of action
4. Formation of recommendations
5. Formation of business case
6. Selection and management of stakeholders
7. Design and development of campaign
8. Engagement of political leadership structures, processes and elements
9. Marketing and events execution
10. Monitoring and Review (evaluation)
11. Celebration of completion
12. Succession and strategic planning
13. Mentoring
14. Meeting place and dialogue development



# Tips for Success

The 'Tips for Success' listed below are based on the knowledge CERES Sustainable Education Outreach Group, Brunswick has gained from mentoring over 600 schools in school sustainability initiatives. Schools that have been successful with ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic in the past have displayed the following characteristics.

## > **Commitment to the Program**

The school needs to have a clear understanding of the process, goals and requirements of the program including staff, communication with the school community and cost. Successful schools have celebrated the commencement of the program at a general assembly to generate whole school awareness and support and have publicised their involvement in the school newsletter and on the school website.

## > **Sustainability included in the Strategic Plan**

Schools that have been efficient and effective in implementing the Resource Modules of the program have included their commitment to Sustainability in the school's Strategic Plan.

## > **Leadership Support**

It is essential that the Principal, leadership team and School Council are fully supportive of the program.

## > **Whole School Involvement**

Participation and ongoing communication between students, teachers, parents and the leadership team ensures effective planning and implementation of the program.

## > **Monitoring and Progress**

The program requires data to be entered at least quarterly online in 'SETS' (Schools Environmental Tracking System). Schools that have been successful have utilised the SETS data in their curriculum, and publicised and celebrated it in the local media and school newsletter.

## > **Teacher Support**

Schools that have successfully completed the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic Core Module program supported the program coordinator and team to regularly have time to plan and update baseline data.



## > **Student Involvement**

Successful schools have realised that the goals of the program are primarily Education for Sustainability. Therefore the students play a central role by being actively involved in curriculum based learning as well as Student Action Teams to take ownership and lead the program in the school.

## > **Embed Sustainability Initiatives in the Curriculum**

Schools spend a great deal of time, money and resources setting up sustainability projects in the school ground. By embedding sustainability projects into the curriculum (whether it be a frog bog, photo-voltaic panels, water tanks or indigenous planting), successful schools have helped to ensure ongoing use, monitoring and maintenance of the precious resources they have invested so heavily in. They have also created a richer, more diverse and interesting curriculum to engage students with.

## > **Sustainability Hub Website**

The Sustainability Hub website <http://sustainability.ceres.org.au> celebrates and documents the achievement of schools around Victoria. Successful schools have uploaded case studies and pictures to celebrate and share their work and become a part of a state-wide Sustainable School Community. Successful schools have created a direct link from their school's website to case studies on the Sustainability Hub.

## > **School Intranet**

Schools have found it beneficial to create a file on the school's intranet that holds all data relevant to the school's Sustainability actions and initiatives. This enables staff and students ongoing access to the progress of the program.

## > **Communication with your Facilitator/Education Officer**

The program includes the support and mentoring by an expert facilitator or Education Officer. Successful schools have utilised this working relationship by maintaining consistent communication through phone calls, emails and the newsletter. This ensures that schools get support when needed, stay up to date, and seize further opportunities available.





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