

Living Laudato Si' at Catholic Education South Australia Action Paper System Thinking Initiative 4

Context:

Catholic Education South Australia has had a long and ongoing commitment to ecological conversion and action. This commitment has informed priorities in curriculum, pedagogy, capital planning and development and how we go about our daily work at the CEO. We have recently embraced a new phase in both strategic direction and ecclesial dialogue, and this is a timely moment to re-commit and deepen our system-wide commitment to the vision of Laudato Si.

In November 2017, Catholic Education South Australia launched the [Ecological Conversion and Action Plan](#) which has been an opportunity to celebrate our connection to all creation and our role in the care of God's earth. The vision of this plan was to represent our system's collective commitment to ecological conversion and action as a core part of our identity as Catholic Schools within the broader mission of the church. Similar to Laudate Deum, more action is needed to bring this plan to life.

In September 2022, the Council for Integral Ecology within the Archdiocese of Adelaide launched their [Laudato Si' Action Platform and Strategic Plan](#). Three of the twenty-four actions named in this plan are:

- Committing to reducing our institutional footprint and achieving carbon neutrality by 2030
- Modelling sustainability at its events in use of resources
- Providing education and formation for finance committees and those in decision-making roles regarding sustainable resourcing

At the end of 2022, the *Strategic System Paper: Living Laudato Si*, developed by the Ecological Advisory Committee was endorsed by Leadership. These six priorities have line of sight with and reflect direction of both documents above.

This proposal further develops Priority Area 4:

4. Schools and Offices demonstrate the integration of the principles of Laudato Si into the pre-planning, building and reviewing processes of built and natural spaces.

Action: Explore partnerships in creating green star accredited buildings process for school development/redevelopment in order to facilitate cultural change and drive Laudato Si learning imperatives.

Why is this important?

On May 24, 2015, the Pope's encyclical [Laudato si' - On Care for Our Common Home](#) was released. This was a mandate for all people of good will to take action.

On October 4, 2023, a follow-up apostolic exhortation from Pope Francis called [Laudate Deum – Praise God](#) was released.

In this exhortation, Pope Francis notes that it is eight years since he published his encyclical *Laudato Si* and that he believes that there has been insufficient action. This is a timely message for us all.

The commitment to ecological conversion has been one of the strong markers in CESA's story so far – it is quite distinguishing - and as we continue to grow as a community of schools and offices, it is timely to bed down practices for the future.

A deeper commitment to living Laudato Si is a deeper commitment to a preferred future of humanity.

How we hope to get there

To bring our system-wide commitment and vision for Goal 4 to life, the Ecological Advisory Committee are proposing the following system wide project titled '**State of Schools Integral Ecology Project**'.

- **Stage 1 Development**

PHD Internship from The University of Adelaide to work with CESA for 3 months:

- The *intern* would develop a template to enable data collection for the *State of Schools Integral Ecology Project for Catholic Schools in South Australia*
- This would occur with guidance of a Project Officer within CESA working with the intern. The proposed template is imagined to have drop down tabs (beginner, emerging, proficient, lead etc) in different parameters including: Energy Efficiency, Waste management, Water Management and Ecology Education.
- We would test this with 5 schools before fine tuning and then at the end of the project deliver the template to CESA for use. A workspace and office expenses will be made available.
- Timeline: Term April- July 2024

- **Stage 2 Implementation**

Following the collection of this initial data, the CESA Project Officer will visit each school using the template devised by the intern student.

- The CESA Project Officer will visit schools to gather data/evidence for where each school is at.
- Leadership is presented with a comprehensive report of the *State of Schools integral ecology project for Catholic Schools in South Australia*
- Timeline: August- November 2024

- **Stage 3 Long term project**

Using the *State of Schools integral ecology project for Catholic Schools in South Australia* report, CESA will develop a long-term partnering collaboration project with the university and industry to identify possible projects including:

- Student citizen science projects which are funded by the university
- CESA could become a Living Lab where we are engaged in an immersive learning experience, and we track and observe the impact that this change has over time.
- CESA could collaboratively apply for a joint ARC Grant over a three-year period where we develop, track and monitor growth over time. Our contribution would be minimal (maybe 10K a year over 3 years) and we would contribute our time and resources. We would partner with ISER (Institute for Sustainability, Energy and Resources).
- Timeline: 2025-2027