Creating We Care
Educating for Sustainable Futures

A Position Statement on Justice, Peace and Ecological Stewardship
1. Introduction

Humans are both ‘earth and breath of God beings’ (Genesis 2:7), part of the interconnected community of creation, inter-related with all other creatures. As co-creators with God and as stewards, humans are charged with cultivating and caring for all creation (Genesis 2:15). Care for creation flows out of religious respect for the integrity of creation and concern for the common good - past, present and future (Catechism of the Catholic Church n.2415). This church teaching requires an understanding of God’s grace in all of humanity and the natural world, ‘an integration of nature and culture’ and a view of the human person who is in solidarity with all other human beings as part of the human family. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live their lives in spiritual connectedness with a sense of the sacredness of the land and all living creatures. We are called by our faith tradition and the spiritual heritage of this ancient land to care for creation through ethical and ecological stewardship.

The Archdiocese of Brisbane Catholic Education Council Justice Education Policy (July 2012) states that we are committed to creating learning communities that teach for, and witness to justice, peace and ecological stewardship shaped by biblical understandings and Church social teaching.

Creation We Care: a Position Statement on Justice, Peace and Ecological Stewardship, assists Brisbane Catholic Education school and office communities to honour this commitment.

2. Position Statement

The school and office communities of Brisbane Catholic Education have a responsibility to work towards the Christian imperative of Ecological Stewardship, Justice and Peace through a commitment to formation, learning and transformative action.

The challenge for each school and office community is to intentionally shape, articulate and actively work towards a shared mission informed by the Christian notion of ethical and ecological stewardship. This involves recognition that the call to Christian stewardship requires both an active and spiritual response; that all of creation is a sacrament, vivified by the Creator Spirit. It implies a stewardship of head, heart and hands in working towards ecological stewardship for all (Justice Education Policy).
3. Implications

The response required from each community is dynamic and iterative, and involves:

• Forming and Learning
  ~ Experiencing God’s presence in all of creation (silence and stillness)
  ~ Seeking wisdom and new understandings through dialogue, listening and learning
  ~ Articulating a shared vision and mission

• Acting collaboratively for transformation
  ~ Animating and Communicating – inspiring, energising, converting and empowering within and beyond the community
  ~ Prioritising
  ~ Strategising and Planning (creativity and innovation)
  ~ Actively Engaging (participating)
  ~ Celebrating and Reflecting
  ~ Responding and Renewing.

4. Strategies

All members of Brisbane Catholic Education Offices and school communities, are invited to consider the following processes and strategies to inform their response.

Formation

• Provide opportunities to connect with God’s gift of creation through worship
• Establish an area for contemplation/prayer/worship in the natural environment
• Provide opportunities for meditative prayer, contemplative practices
• Provide opportunities for immersion experiences facilitated by related experts such as theologians, indigenous elders, environmental educators and archaeologists
• Provide ongoing spiritual formation shaped by biblical understandings and Church Social teachings on Justice, Peace and Ecological Stewardship
• Engage in processes of dialogue that promote an openness to listen to and respectfully acknowledge and understand diverse positions in order to contribute to deeper learning and wisdom
• Ensure that existing school and office vision and mission statements support a commitment to the values of Justice, Peace and Ecological Stewardship and are reflected in each school/office
• Use our vision and mission statements to articulate an approach to strategies that underpin planning for sustainable practices
• Establish governance structures to ensure whole school and office engagement forms the foundation of planning.

Learning
• Provide ongoing professional learning shaped by biblical understandings and Church Social Teachings on Justice, Peace and Ecological Stewardship
• Develop learners’ knowledge, deep understandings, skills and values about educating for sustainability including justice, peace and ecological stewardship. For students, this learning is across all areas of the Australian and Religious curricula.
• Ensure National, State and Archdiocesan initiatives and priorities relating to justice, peace and ecological stewardship are implemented.

Collaborative Action
School and office communities:
• Strategically plan to ensure that sustainable practices are embedded into organisation structure, policy and processes and that these align with their mission and vision
• Formalise leadership roles and relationships within the community to lead and coordinate action
• Foster an environment which supports critical and creative thinking as a catalyst to insight, innovation and action for preferred futures
• Connect with the local environment and actively seek relevant data and information to inform decision making
• Work with local clergy and parish bodies to strengthen the shared mission of parish and school in the areas of peace, justice and ecological stewardship
• Form partnerships with parents through collaboration, consultation and action in order to provide a sustainable, safe, healthy and productive environment for students, staff and community
  • Forge productive links and networks with professional bodies and institutions, the broader community and government organisations dedicated to justice, peace and ecological stewardship
  • Model behaviour change through celebration of achievement and continual demonstration of the practices and systems associated with the wise and just use of resources.
5. References

The position statement is underpinned by:

- BCE Strategic Renewal Framework (2012-2016)
- Educating for Sustainable Futures in Catholic Schools in Queensland Position Statement (Queensland Catholic Education Commission 2011)
- Justice Education Policy (Archdiocese of Brisbane, Catholic Education Council 2012)
- Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008)
- On Holy Ground: An Ecological Vision for Catholic Education in Queensland (Catholic Earthcare, 2007)
- The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 3 (ACARA 2012).