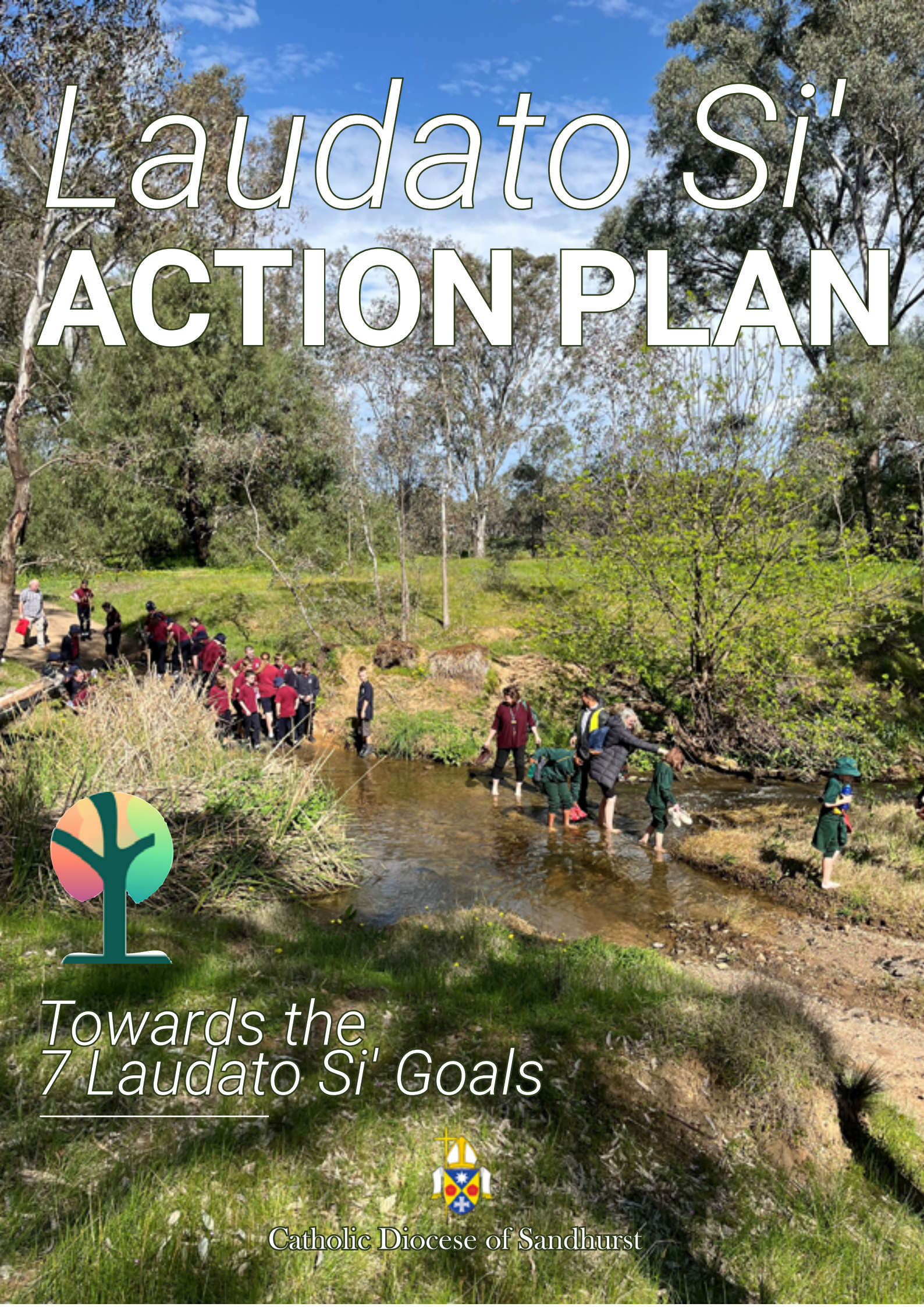
Laudato Si'
ACTION PLAN



Towards the 7 Laudato Si' Goals

Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

The Laudato Si' Goals

In 2015, Pope Francis published his encyclical, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, calling for urgent action to protect the environment and address climate change. Grounded in Scripture and Catholic teaching, *Laudato Si'* highlights the deep connection between ecological destruction, poverty and injustice and urges us to "hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor".

In May 2020, on the fifth anniversary of the publication of *Laudato Si',* the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development launched the *Laudato Si' Action Platform;* an online platform designed to guide Catholic communities across the world through a seven-year journey of ecological conversion. The platform encourages communities to take concrete steps towards the seven *Laudato Si'* Goals by providing resources, inspiration, and a structure to develop local Action Plans.

This call to action inspired the theme of the Australian Catholic Bishops' 2021–22 Social Justice Statement, *"Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor"*, which calls for a profound transformation in the way we relate to the environment and marginalised communities.

In 2023, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference appointed *Caritas Australia's Catholic Earthcare* as the lead agency to support the Church's response to Decree 8 from the Fifth Australian Plenary Council.

This decree urges dioceses, parishes, schools and organisations to take urgent action and enrol in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform to develop or join an Action Plan to care for our common home by 2030.

SEVEN Laudato Si' Goals

RESPOND TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH

A call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and ecological sustainability.

RESPOND TO THE CRY OF THE POOR

The response to the Cry of the Poor is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth.

ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

Ecological Economics acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere – our common home.

ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

The Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles is grounded in the idea of sufficiency, and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy.

ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Ecological Education is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology in order to foster ecological awareness and transformative action.

ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

Ecological Spirituality springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to “discover God in all things”, both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly reality.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT

Community resilience and empowerment envisage a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels.

Introduction

In November 2021, Bishop Shane Mackinlay registered the Diocese of Sandhurst on the international *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, committing to a seven-year journey towards the platform's seven ecological and social goals.

In May 2022 the Diocese's commitment to *Laudato Si'* Action was officially launched on the banks of Broken Creek in Nathalia.

As part of this journey, all Sandhurst parishes and schools are encouraged to register with Catholic Earthcare and become Earthcare Parishes, Earthcare Schools or Earthcare Organisations.

This *Laudato Si'* Action Plan is for the Sandhurst Diocesan Chancery and its operations. It was developed by the Sandhurst Care for Creation Team, in alignment with the Australian Catholic Bishops' 2021–22 Social Justice Statement and Decree 8 of the Fifth Plenary Council, using Catholic Earthcare resources and in consultation with Chancery staff.

Care for Creation Statement

A Statement addressed to the People of God in the Diocese of Sandhurst with the aim of encouraging greater appreciation of Creation and a deeper understanding of our responsibility for its care.

Our world is beautiful and mysterious, inviting us to reflect with wonder and gratitude to God who loves it into existence. Every part of creation is connected in a flourishing web of life with delicately balanced bio-diversity. Humans are part of nature, created in the image of God to live in this web of relationships, with God, each other, the earth and all creatures *[Laudato Si'* 139]. In the rural Diocese of Sandhurst, communities are surrounded by a diversity of life and landscapes, experiencing God's blessings in unique and wonderful ways.

The goodness of God's work in the world is celebrated in Scriptures and the writings of great spiritual teachers. Our sacramental worldview recognises that we encounter God through creation. In his Canticle of Creation, St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology, celebrated our kinship with all creatures and our sister, Mother Earth. Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that we are part of the created environment. We are called to live as responsible stewards of the earth, conscious that it was created for the 'common good'. We are called to understand that the ability of all, both present and future generations, to live with dignity, is intimately connected to our care for our common home. A truly Christian spirituality will be evident inlifestyles in which

"the effects of our relationship with Jesus Christ become evident in our relationship with the world around us".

Laudato Si' 217

The created world is in crisis. Human activity is damaging land, air, water, creatures and other humans, especially the most vulnerable. Biodiversity is diminished and the earth's resources are over-exploited. The world is polluted to the extent that many environments and their inhabitants are sickened and impoverished. The balance of nature is severely threatened. Critical environmental 'tipping points' are imminent.

In recent decades, Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis have each summoned us to a profound ecological and spiritual conversion.

In his first encyclical, *Laudato Si,'* Pope Francis called all people to work together to care for our common home. In particular, he invited Church communities to live a Christian spirituality of care for creation and simpler lifestyles, for

"living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience".

Laudato Si' 216-217.

Humanity must **"hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor",** [*Laudato Si'* 49] to ensure a safe, fruitful, hospitable and sustainable world for all.

In their 2002 statement "A New Earth: the Environmental Challenge", the Australian Bishops warned that

"Urgent action … is necessary to protect our land, water and air ... and individuals, community groups, governments at all levels, businesses and faith communities all have roles to play".

Our Sandhurst Diocese is a community whose members have valuable insights: first Australians, who have cared for the land through generations; older parishioners who lived simply and wasted little through difficult times; and young people and their families who are well-informed and passionately committed to caring for the environment. Our rural parishes are used to engaging cooperatively with other community groups.

With the worldwide Church, the Catholic Church in Sandhurst is called to show leadership through shared wisdom, responsible decision making, good practice in a context of prayer and a spirituality that knows

"the entire material universe speaks of God's love … "

Laudato Si' 84.

Most Rev. Shane Mackinlay
Bishop of Sandhurst
October 2021

ACTION PLAN

1. Response to the Cry of the Earth

ACTIONS	TEAM	We aim to COMPLETE this action in ...			Connects to other Goals
		2025	2026	2027	
Encourage all parishes and schools to register with Catholic Earthcare Australia by 2027	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation	✓	✓	✓	5
Encourage all parishes and schools to progress from "Self-Assessment" status to "Action Plan" status in their registration with Catholic Earthcare Australia					
Develop *Laudato Si'* page on Diocesan website which includes: • Tips on Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle • Feature stories on parish eco activities via Sandpiper eNews • Links to resources/campaigns etc.	Mission and Pastoral Life		✓		5
Laudato Si' page link to be promoted through Sandpiper e-News and social media	Mission and Pastoral Life		✓		5

ACTION PLAN

2. Response to the Cry of the Poor

ACTIONS	TEAM	We aim to COMPLETE this action in ...			Connects to other Goals
		2025	2026	2027	
Annual Diocesan Public Launch of Caritas' Project Compassion Promote Caritas' Project Compassion throughout Lent Promote Caritas' Emergency Appeals, Campaigns and Advocacy as needed	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation	✓	✓	✓	5
Promote Slavery-free Easter and Slavery-free products throughout Parishes by email, in diocesan e-News, *Laudato Si'* webpage and Social Media, particularly throughout Lent and Advent	Mission and Pastoral Life	✓	✓	✓	3 & 5
Encourage support for St Vincent de Paul and Catholic Mission through the *Laudato Si'* web-page and in Sandpiper e-News	Mission and Pastoral Life	✓	✓	✓	
Investigate and develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation		✓	✓	5 & 6

ACTION PLAN

3. Ecological Economics

ACTIONS	TEAM	We aim to COMPLETE this action in ...			Connects to other Goals
		2025	2026	2027	
a. Invest in socially responsible companies. Review quality of CDOS investments, e.g., solar, wind, batteries, non-extractive industry b. Adhere to Sandhurst ethical investment guidelines c. Investigate the use of 'green' energy options	Finance		✓		1, 2, 4, 7
Commit to socially and ethically responsible purchasing	Finance		✓		2 & 7
Investigate ethical carbon offset for plane travel by diocesan clergy and staff to offset our contribution to carbon pollution through air travel	Finance		✓		1 & 4

ACTION PLAN

4. Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

ACTIONS	TEAM	We aim to COMPLETE this action in ...			Connects to other Goals
		2025	2026	2027	
Diocesan events will avoid providing single-use plastic bottles Where bulk water is provided, encourage the use of reusable or paper containers	Mission and Pastoral Life Administration	✓			1 & 5
Diocesan events will use green waste, and recycling bins as provided by the local council	Mission and Pastoral Life Administration	✓			1 &5
Choose meeting spaces of a size proportionate to the number in attendance	Chancery	✓			1 & 5
Recycle and compost as much as possible Provide training and resources to enable full staff participation in existing waste management systems and services Continue to streamline waste management systems	Chancery		✓		1 & 5
Engage in socially and environmentally responsible procurement of office supplies and catering Reduce consumption of paper and other office supplies by providing education of staff	Finance	✓			1 & 5
Reduce food waste for example, donate leftover food from events to programs for people in need when possible Use organic waste service provided by Local Government	Finance Mission and Pastoral Life	✓	✓	✓	
Make ethical choices in purchasing as well as ensuring that our quality second-hand items are repurposed, reused and recycled appropriately	Chancery	✓			1-7

ACTION PLAN

5. Ecological Education

ACTIONS	TEAM	We aim to COMPLETE this action in ...			Connects to other Goals
		2025	2026	2027	
Provide green tips for social media and Chancery weekly bulletin notices, particularly during the Season of Creation	Care for Creation Mission and Pastoral Life		✓		2 & 4
Promote and encourage *Laudato Si'* Animators Course and other courses as available	Mission and Pastoral Life	✓			1-7
Promote and encourage involvement in seminar and workshop opportunities on local flora/fauna/peoples, e.g., liaise with local Landcare groups	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation		✓		1 & 6

ACTION PLAN
6. Ecological Spirituality

ACTIONS	TEAM	We aim to COMPLETE this action in ...			Connects to other Goals
		2025	2026	2027	
Annual Diocesan Season of Creation outdoor Mass	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation	✓	✓	✓	
Prayer Book accompaniment to *Laudato Si'* Prayer Book accompaniment to *Laudato Deum*	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation	✓			
Review Sandhurst Care for Creation Diocesan Statement (October 2021) in the light of the development of the *Laudato Si'* Goals	Care for Creation		✓		5
Develop reflective spirituality resources and activities for appreciation of Creation	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation		✓		
Mary MacKillop Indigenous Plants Garden and History Trail in Numurkah and the Mass Tree in Wahgunyah declared as diocesan pilgrimage sites for Jubilee Year 2025	Mission and Pastoral Life	✓			
Laudato Si' and *Laudato Deum* quotes published on social media and via Chancery bulletin notices during *Laudato Si'* Week and the Season of Creation	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation		✓		1-7

ACTION PLAN

7. Community Resilience and Empowerment

ACTIONS	TEAM	We aim to COMPLETE this action in ...			Connects to other Goals
		2025	2026	2027	
Annual presentation to Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council on matters relating to Social and Ecological Justice	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation		✓		5 & 6
Present on social and ecological justice and *Laudato Si'* Action Platform to ministry groups on request	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation		✓		5 & 6
Support and strengthen Earthcare Parishes in the Diocese and strengthen Earthcare Parishes already working on their goals	Care for Creation		✓	✓	1-7
Promote and support the work of Caritas; ARRCC; NATSICC; ACF; Bishops' Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace; Bishops' Office for Migrants and Refugees; Catholic Mission; and others in their campaigns and advocacy work Link the work of these agencies to *Laudato Si'* to encourage participation	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation	✓	✓	✓	5
Diocesan presence at ecumenical and community events that support sustainability and care for creation	Mission and Pastoral Life Care for Creation	✓	✓	✓	5

FIFTH PLENARY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Decree Eight: Integral Ecology and Conversion for the Sake of our Common Home.

1. As drought, bushfires, floods and extreme weather become more common in Australia, we realise the urgency of responding to our baptismal calling of taking up God's mission of love for the whole of creation.

2. Throughout the Scriptures we learn of God's love for creation, from the affirmation of the goodness of creation in Genesis (Genesis 1:2–4) to the Book of Revelation's vision of a creation made new (Revelation 215). All life and all that sustains it comes from God the Creator as gift, and so we are committed to care for our Common Home, and to cherish and promote the dignity of human life from conception to natural death. Local and universal Catholic Social Teaching, too, has helped us to reflect on how we might live in right relationship with the Creator, one another, and all of creation.

3. Pope Francis' landmark Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (2015) powerfully pointed out that we do not stand outside creation but are "joined in a splendid universal communion" with other creatures and are called to care for the common home which we share with them (n. 220). In their Social Justice Statement 2021–22, "Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor", the Australian Bishops also affirm that we need "an integral approach to economic, social and ecological issues" – an integral ecology – if we are to address the interlocking crises of our times.

4. *Laudato Si'* reiterates Pope Saint John Paul II's call to ecological conversion and encourages the Church especially to undertake ecological education and to foster ecological spirituality (General Audience, 17 January 2001; *Laudato Si'* Chapter 6). The call to ecological conversion is part of the call to defend human life from conception to natural death, especially those who are most vulnerable, and to care for all forms of life on Earth, because "systems of life and love are deeply interconnected" (John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae, March 1995, n.93). Responding to this call requires new ways of seeing the world, thinking and behaving(John Paul II, Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation, World Day of Peace Message 1990, n. 13; Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor). Ecological conversion entails turning from human dominance to belonging to the community of life and to interdependence with all other creatures, awe in the beauty of creation and being nourished by a sense of God's presence (*Laudato Si'* n. 223).

5. Ecological conversion is both personal and communal, and therefore, we must act to care for creation in ways that are both personal and communal. Such action will be informed by Scripture, our theological tradition, Catholic Social Teaching, human knowledge and scientific insight. In responding to these issues, we acknowledge the "unique place of the wisdom of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who were caring for Country before Abraham set out for the promised land, and who continue to do so today" (Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor). As part of the Oceania Region, we have a particular responsibility to act in solidarity with the peoples of the region to ensure that their voices are heard and attended to in discussions and initiatives in the Church and the international community.

6. The Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development's Laudato Si' Action Platform provides a unique global vehicle for communal action. In Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor, the Bishops Conference committed itself to joining the Platform and developing a *Laudato Si'* Action Plan. Individuals and families, parishes, dioceses and eparchies, educational institutions, healthcare and healing organisations, businesses and the economic sector, organisations and groups, along with religious institutes can all participate either by developing their own Laudato Si' Action Plans or by taking part in an established Action Plan.

7. THEREFORE, this Plenary Council:

a. recognises the sacred duty to care for and protect the Earth as a common home for all God's creatures, including the generations to come;

b. encourages all Catholic people, families, parishes, dioceses, eparchies, religious institutes, educational institutions, and other Catholic organisations to accept Pope Francis' invitation to join the Laudato Si' Action Platform and either develop Laudato Si'Action Plans, or participate in existing Laudato Si' Action Plans, as a vehicle for their ecological conversion; and

c. promotes initiatives in Church and society which promote and defend human life from conception to natural death, especially those who are most vulnerable.

"The future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of people and their ability to organise."

Pope Francis

This document has been prepared by the Sandhurst Diocese
Care for Creation Team

It will be reviewed annually

Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst