



MARIST BROTHERS
Province of Australia

MARIST BROTHERS PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

'Laudato Si'

POLICY

The Marist Brothers Province of Australia recognises that environmental sustainability is essential for the health and wellbeing of our planet earth and the survival of all species. It is therefore committed to engage in education and action for a more just and sustainable world.

1. DEFINITION AND SCOPE

Sustainability: Operating and behaving in a manner which equally considers environmental responsibility alongside social and financial responsibility, to meet the needs of the present and create a foundation for future generations to meet their own needs. (*Stockholm Declaration, 1987*)

This policy applies to the Marist Brothers Province of Australia as a legal and church entity, the Provincial and Provincial Council, each local community, individual Brothers and staff employed in Marist Brothers Communities, Ministries, Centres and Offices.

Where applicable, this policy will apply to staff and visitors to Marist Communities and places of ministry.

2. RATIONALE

We embrace the value of stewardship, care and reverence for the body, the mind, the spirit, material things and the earth. These are core Christian value.

In 1971 Blessed Pope Paul VI warned against the tragic consequences of unchecked human activity: "Due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming in turn a victim of this degradation". Pope Saint John Paul II challenged us to move towards a sustainable lifestyle when he called us to "stimulate and sustain the ecological conversion" (*Jan 17, 2001*). In his message for the World Day of Peace in 2010, Pope Benedict XVI said: "*When making use of natural resources, we should be concerned for their protection and consider the cost entailed – environmentally and socially – as an essential part of the overall expenses incurred.*"

More recently, Pope Francis has challenged the Church, and indeed all citizens of the world, to make the care of earth a core responsibility and priority. *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis's Encyclical Letter on Ecology and Climate is a rationale for and manifesto of action for sustainability, economic justice and ecological care. He expressed his hope that the Encyclical might help all people acknowledge the "*appeal, immensity and urgency of the challenge*". He warned against "*obstructionist attitudes*" that "*can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions*". He invites all to "*a new and universal solidarity*".

This solidarity must result in concrete commitments and strategic actions.

We recognise that a sustainable society is based on a set of values that are consistent with the most fundamental values of the Gospel. These include:

- respect, care and compassion for ourselves, others and our environment;
- responsibility for our actions;
- integrity and sacredness of all life on earth including the processes and systems upon which that life depends;
- understanding and inclusion of all peoples and perspectives.

3. COMMITMENTS

This policy will promote:

3.1 Action that:

- improves environmental sustainability in our communities and Province activities;
- encourages all Marist sponsored ministries to commit to environmental sustainability;
- promotes a culture of sustainability in wise stewardship of resources;
- promotes appropriate acquisition, use and disposal of information and communication technology;
- ensures that biological diversity and ecological processes are protected in Province properties;
- encourages transport options that are less greenhouse intensive;
- embraces creative and innovative approaches to environmental problems;
- recognises and protects the heritage and historic value of some Province properties;
- incorporates principles of ecologically sustainable design into all capital, maintenance and infrastructure projects;
- encourages appropriate eco-partnerships and engagement both within and beyond the Province;
- strives for social and inter-generational equity;
- applies appropriately to Province ministries within and beyond Australia, such as Cambodia and East Timor.

3.2 Learning that:

Provides opportunities for:

- ongoing education in ecological understandings and insights from Scripture and traditions, the lived experience of the Marist Brothers and the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church;
- fostering a love of learning, the arts and beauty as reflections of God in creation;
- understanding the real, overall costs of development;
- sharing good practice;
- becoming aware of purchasing goods that do not exploit people or the environment;
- empowering Marist Brothers and their employees to make an active and informed contribution to local and global environmental sustainability.

3.3 Accountability that:

Provides proof of sustainability performance by:

- compliance with all relevant environmental legislation;
- regular energy, water, waste, technology, and grounds and garden audits and recommendations arising from these audits;
- use of improved sustainable transport options;
- an investment portfolio in enterprises that are sustainable and ethical.

Approved by the Council of the Marist Brothers Province of Australia