



The Earth Care Charter

for Earth-Care Education

Prepared by Norman Habel in collaboration with Lutheran Education Australia for the 2017 Eco-Reformation

Six Principles & Six Missions

The introduction of the Lutheran Education Earth Care Charter places front and centre the importance of environmental and sustainable education for all students. Beyond this though, the Earth Care Charter is much broader. It is wonderfully created so that all members of the community can readily engage with sustainable learning through the six key principles and missions; students, parents and staff can engage with this charter. A charter by its nature allows for a clear terms of reference for a common understanding and objectives of how we, as a learning site, can ensure that our programs, actions and outcomes contribute to a framework that is best practice.

As an Earth Care Charter school, the framework will allow us to ensure consistency with our curriculum, policies and procedures throughout the entire school. In addition, it opens up conversation, dialogue and action into the possibility of how the care for our environment is everyone's responsibility. Through an explicit and deep understanding of our care and utilisation of the Earth, it is our hope that students, parents and staff understand and experience the positive impact they can have on our planet.

The Earth Care Charter allows for consistency and sharing between our learning sites. We strive as Lutheran Schools to adapt to the Charter adopted by Lutheran Education Australia. Our understandings, programs and events can be shared across sites for the benefit all our schools collectively. In the end we all benefit, and most importantly, Mother Earth.

Cain McDonald
PRINCIPAL

The love of God stays the same, but our theology is constantly evolving. The Lutheran Church itself was formed in the belief that the way people of medieval times talked about and heard God needed to change. Our minds needed to re-form. So we transformed our structures, attitudes, practises, way of reading the Bible, and way of speaking about God. We called it 'The Reformation'.

Five hundred years later we are at a point of reformation again.

The Earth Care Charter is an important document in the unifying of a Lutheran understanding of God's creation. What it does is draw on the imagery of relationship inherent in and central to the Bible, and directs it towards our planet. So when Jesus speaks of loving our neighbour, we no longer see 'the poor' as referring only to human in need, but also our oceans, animals, skies, and flora. Can a true Gospel speak of a love for humanity without a love for that which was provided to sustain it? The Charter invites us to love all of creation as we love ourselves, to show compassion to all that is living on our planet and begin connecting in a new way.

Very few will argue the fact that we are in an ecological crisis. What we don't agree upon is our response. The Earth Care Charter provides a simple theological framework for Lutheran schools and congregations to respond in a coherent way. I entrust the Earth Care Charter to you and invite you to journey with us in seeing God anew.

Jon Goessling
COLLEGE PASTOR



Principle One – Earth is a Cosmic Sanctuary
(The Spiritual & the Spatial Dimension)

Principle: Planet Earth is a unique sanctuary in the cosmos, a sacred site filled with life and the presence of the Creator Spirit.

Mission: Boldly celebrate Earth as a cosmic sanctuary filled with Presence and sustain our planet as a precious sacred site.



Principle Two – Earth is a Book of Nature
(The Scientific Dimension)



Principle: Planet Earth is a Book of Nature in the library called Creation, a rare volume filled with science, stories and stunning images.

Mission: Read the Book of Nature closely, research its hidden wisdom, tell its fascinating stories and preserve its beautiful images for posterity.

Principle Three– Earth is a Web of Mysteries
(The Ecological Dimension)

Principle: Planet Earth is a wondrous web of inter-related forces, mysteries and mazes where we are all inter-connected and all belong.

Mission: Include eco-tours across the curriculum, probe the stories of our links with Earth and protect the mysteries that bind us together.



Principle Four – Earth is a Family Tree
(The Evolutionary Dimension)



Principle: Planet Earth is the ancestral head of a tree of living creatures with a family history that is vital for all members of her evolving family.

Mission: Carefully trace the evolution of life in Earth, remember our ancestors, connect with our kin and rescue our endangered relatives.

Principle Five – Earth is a Tough Love Mother
(The Personal Dimension)

Principle: Planet Earth is the mother of humanity who has nurtured her children for millennia and faced them with a life of tough love.

Mission: Publicly name planet Earth as our mother, nurture her and learn from her how to survive on a fragile planet.



Principle Six – Earth is a Wounded Parent
(The Environmental Dimension)



Principle: Planet Earth is our wounded mother calling for personal care from her children and deep compassion from the Creator Spirit.

Mission: Make a commitment to hear the voice of our wounded parent and establish a dedicated Earth-care program designed to provide healing and restoration for planet Earth.



Focus: Earth Care Charter Principle Six

*Planet Earth is a Wounded Parent
(The Environmental Dimension)*

Exploring Perspectives to Heal our Wounded Parent Tatachilla Lutheran College EcoClassroom



Tatachilla Lutheran College is an R – 12 coeducation Christian school, located in McLaren Vale on the southern fringe of Adelaide, South Australia. In 1997 a 2.4 hectare site within the grounds of Tatachilla Lutheran College was designated as the site for the EcoClassroom. The name was selected to encompass the ethos of this unique facility with the aim:

To be a learning place to facilitate an understanding of plants, animals, soils, water, atmosphere, geography and history of the Willunga Basin.

The essence of the EcoClassroom is to develop in students and visitors an understanding of the importance of nature and natural processes. It is designed to inspire us all to see the wonder of God's creation. This facility encourages the attitude to enjoy and appreciate nature and at the same time, foster a caring and responsible approach towards the environment. The EcoClassroom revegetation program is modelled on pre-European ecosystems that once existed in the local area. With the assistance of community support, the project goals have been achieved through a number of strategic actions including:

- 1997- Direct seeding of local species
- 1997 - Development of permanent pond in natural wetland and feral exclusion fencing through Federation Community Projects Commonwealth Grant
- 2000 - Official opening
- 2001 - Introduction of walking trails, 10x10m grid reference markers and seven distinct ecosystems identified and mapped
- 2002 - Introduction of Brush-tailed Bettongs and Long-nosed Potoroos
- 2004 - Boardwalks developed by students via Doorways2Construction with funding from City of Onkaparinga
- 2005 - Tammar wallabies introduced to add to the diversity and ecological sustainability within the area
- 2006 - Kurna Tappa an Indigenous interpretive trail was developed in consultation with Kurna Warra Pintyandi
- 2010 - Development of EcoSkills Centre, featuring passive design elements including rammed earth walls, comfort glazing and low VOC paints.
- 2013 - Rescue Centre developed by Doorways2Construction students
- 2015 - 0.8 ha extension encompassing revegetation of the nationally threatened *Eucalyptus microcarpa* community
- Ongoing - Propagation and annual planting with assistance with Trees for Life



Tatachilla Lutheran College welcomes schools, community groups, government and non-government organisations to visit this unique educational resource. Qualified EcoStaff offer hands-on learning activities and guided tours that focus on curriculum and extra-curricular subjects. Visits can be tailored to the required needs of visitors.

Topics include:

- Australian natural landscape management
- Wetland and macroinvertebrate investigations
- Chemical analysis of soil and water
- Native vegetation identification and mapping of associations
- Native fauna trapping, monitoring and management
- 10x10m grid reference markers allowing for mapping and scientific investigation
- Kurna Tappa, an Indigenous Interpretive Trail
- Impacts of colonisation
- Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management
- Doorways2Construction
- Ability to hold camps and field studies
- Management of private sanctuaries

Ecosystems

- ecological sustainability
- biodiversity
- natural landscapes
- historical relevance

Wetlands

- freshwater macroinvertebrates
- water catchment
- water investigations
- human impact

Endemic Flora

- revegetation
- plant identification
- Tree Day for Schools

Native Fauna

- habitat
- trapping
- monitoring
- fauna identification
- life cycles
- threatened species

Walking Trails

- self-guided and guided tours
- wheelchair accessible

Educational Resources

- resources and curriculum support
- qualified educators

Kurna Tappa

- Indigenous education
- cultural tours
- self-guided walking trail

EcoSkills Centre of Excellence

- passive design building

The Friends of the EcoClassroom meet regularly to assist with on-ground maintenance. In addition, this group gathers once a term to trap and monitor the wellbeing of the native fauna within the EcoClassroom.

