

BURDEKIN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

EDUCATING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

POLICY STATEMENT

February 2009

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Introduction

In the beginning God.....

This profound statement is the foundation of a Christian Worldview of reality.

The environment exists because of God.

God described the environment He created as “good”. It was exactly as He intended it to be.

It is difficult to describe the environment that God called “good”. Our human responses could include wonder, beauty, order and diversity.

Sin came into existence. God’s creation that was “good” is no longer good. The result of sin is catastrophic to the original creation.

This is the environment we find ourselves in. The wonder, beauty, order and diversity still exist but it has been marred.

Throughout the centuries the environment has continually declined in quality of life. At different times attempts have been made to address this decline

It was only been in recent years that there has been a move to address environmental issues.

Environmental education has been a part of Australian schooling since the 1970’s. Environmental issues initially concerned natural ecosystems and values arising from pollution of land, air and water, the growth of world population and the depletion of natural resources.

This then expanded where principles of environmental education began to emphasise the total environment – ecological, economic, cultural, historical, social and political- with consideration of technological changes.

In recent years the language of sustainability began to emerge.

Environmental education for sustainability can best be described as a vision of education where people are inspired to assume responsibility for creating an optimistic approach for the future.

This is because there are coordinated attempts to solve environmental issues such as degradation of land and water, problems of high population growth, high energy consumption, pollution across waterways and a continuing decline in biodiversity through activities such as land clearing, destruction of habitats and introduction of pest species to ecosystems.

Burdekin Christian College desires that its students have a positive approach to their future and fully endorses educating its students for a sustainable future.

The following policy refers to national goals and the College’s vision, goals, objectives, focuses areas and indicates a framework for implementation and evaluating, monitoring and reporting.

It is the desire of the College’s Board that the College become a leader in the area of educating for a sustainable future so its students leave the College with an optimistic attitude to their future.

National Goals

In April 1999 The Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs adopted a new set of National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century.

These goals included a goal for environmental education for sustainability.

Goal 1.7. When students leave school, they should have an understanding of, and concern
for stewardship of the natural environment, and the knowledge to contribute to ecologically sustainable development.

Other related goals are:-

Goal 1.1 Skills in analysis and problem-solving and the ability to communicate ideas and information.

Goal 1.3 The capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of the world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives, and to accept responsibility for their own actions.

Goal 1.4 An understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life so they can be active and informed citizens.

Goal 1.8 The knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and for the creative and satisfying use of leisure time.

Vision

A shared vision by the school community is an important element of a whole-school approach to environmental education for sustainability. This vision helps to identify the roles of the school as an organisation, school governance, school leadership, teachers, parents and students.

Burdekin Christian College is seen as a learning centre where sustainability and community are valued.

Governance helps the College to maximize the College's physical and human resources in a way that is ecologically, socially and economically sustainable.

School leadership needs to be proactively involved in the implementation of environmental education for sustainability.

Teachers need to be committed to environmental education for sustainability and be flexible and open to changes and challenges.

Parents need to be supportive of and be encouraged to be involved in environmental education for sustainability activities.

Students need to be actively involved in environmental education for sustainability activities in order to become future citizens who make ethical and responsible decisions for a sustainable future.

Goals

Goals of Burdekin Christian College “Environmental Education for Sustainability” includes enabling students to:

- Value the interdependence of ecological, economic, cultural, social, historical and political dimensions in the context of technological change at the local, state and global levels.
- Ponder how this interdependence affects themselves, their families, the College, the Burdekin Community and other communities in order to make considered decisions.
- Commit to relevant knowledge and understandings, skills and capabilities, attitudes and values and actions and participations to achieve a sustainable future.
- Respect the environment as God’s creation to be enjoyed and valued.
- Show evidence of personal responsibility to and stewardship of the environment.
- Become an active citizen in building a sustainable future.

Objectives

The Staff of Burdekin Christian College are to plan learning activities to achieve the following objectives. The objectives listed are specific to environmental education. When planning integrated units other objectives will be generic across and specific to other Key Learning Areas.

Knowledge and Understandings

- The nature and function of ecological, social, cultural, economic, historical and political systems in the context of technical change and how they interrelate.
- The natural, cultural and spiritual values intrinsic to the environment
- The impact of people on the environment and how the environment influences human activities.
- The principles of ecologically sustainable development.
- The responsibilities and benefits of environmental citizenship, especially in relation to the Burdekin District and the Great Barrier Reef.
- The relevance of a Christian World View to a sustainable environment.

Skills and Capabilities

- Exploration of all aspects of the environment.
- Observes and records knowledge and understandings of the environment.
- Identifies environmental issues.
- Reflects upon environmental challenges and opportunities.
- Predicts consequences of proposed courses of action.
- Communicates environmental issues and solutions to others.

Attitudes and Values

- Respects and cares for the environment with all its uniqueness and weaknesses.
- Conserves and manages resources.
- Respects cultural heritage.
- Acknowledges the Creator of the environment

Action and Participation

- Changes personal lifestyle to secure a sustainable future.
- Undertakes actions to maintain protect and improve local, national and global environments.
- Works in partnership with other students and environmental groups.

School Environmental Management Plan

Burdekin Christian College's School Environmental Management Plan helps the College plan and coordinate environmental education for a sustainable future in a coordinated way.

The plan should be incorporated in the College's strategic plan, providing a link between governance, administration, management and curriculum and be organised under focus areas.

The focus areas are:-

- Curriculum
- Resource Conservation and Waste Management
- Water Conservation
- Energy Conservation
- Litter Prevention
- Protection of the Environment
- School Partnerships
- Student Leadership
- Health and Nutrition
- Education of the Community
- School Spirit.

The College's School Environmental Management Plan will involve input from governance, staff, parents, students, governmental groups, environmental community groups and individual members of the community.

It will have a holistic perspective as it considers an integrated approach to planning, involving the whole school site, the whole school community, all KLA's of the curriculum and the context of the College in the Burdekin District.

It will include both short term and long term visions as it is part of the College's strategic plan.

The plan will provide an integrated approach to education for a sustainable future and a rich source of learning opportunities for students of the College.

The College will evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of its School Environmental Management Plan towards the end of each year at its annual review.

The School Environmental Management Plan will incorporate both the Reef Guardian and Keep Australia Beautiful Council Action Plans.

Curriculum

Implementing environmental education for sustainability in the curriculum involves a whole college approach from early childhood to year 7 and working across all Key Learning Areas.

Outcomes that reflect environmental education for sustainability need to come from the Key Learning Areas of Science, SOSE, English Mathematics, Technology, The Arts, Health and Physical Education and Languages Other Than English.

Such outcomes will provide the framework for an integrated unit arising from the focus for that particular year.

At other times a unit may arise from a specific Key Learning Area.

Professional Development opportunities will be sought for staff members.

Environmental celebrations, events and projects will be included either in integrated units or individual KLA units or stand alone events.

Term excursions will be a feature of activities of units of work as well as practical and real life activities both within and without the College's grounds.

Resource Conservation and Waste Management

Resource conservation and management is based on the refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle and dispose pyramid of activities.

Lessons in each area of the pyramid will arise from outcomes from the strand “Promoting the Health of the Individual and Communities” in the Key Learning Area of Health and Physical Education.

There will be a focus on character development to encourage students to make a stand to refuse arising from the strand “Enhancing Personal Development” in the Key Learning Area of Health and Physical Education.

Students of the College will be encouraged to become conscious of what outputs affect the Great Barrier Reef and look for ways of reducing these outputs that flow in to local waterways.

Students will collect information through audits and surveys to assist in solving the problem of management. This will be part of the chance and data strand of mathematics.

Students will be involved in the collection and appropriate disposal of non-recyclable materials with appropriate signage of rubbish bins and unclean paper bins and efforts will be made to minimize their usage.

Students will be involved in the collection and then either re-using or recycling glass, paper, cardboard, aluminum, steel, plastic and other materials. They will be sent to appropriate facilities. Sufficient recycling bins with appropriate signage will be available.

Students will be involved in the mulching, composting and reuse of green waste. Compost bins and gardens will be available.

Food scraps will be collected in bins with appropriate signage for chook food or compost bins. These bins will be available in student eating areas, staff room and tuck shop area.

Waste paper will be collected and divided into clean and unclean. Clean paper will be shredded and reused in gardens or recycle activities while unclean paper will be disposed of as non-recyclable materials.

The College will embrace activities to minimize the use of plastic bags. As much as possible only paper and calico bags will be evident in use in the tuck shop. Parents will be encouraged to embrace this also when packing students’ lunches.

The College will make a conscious effort each year to reduce the tonnage of materials collected from the College that goes to landfill sites.

Water Conservation

Water conservation is a major issue despite the plentiful availability of water. It has been identified as a separate target area from resource management and wastage.

Water is available to the College through underground water, water from Burdekin Shire Council and rainwater.

Despite the plentiful availability of either, the College Governance will embrace water management issues as a serious matter.

All irrigation systems on the ovals are automated underground sprinkler systems that are programmed to come on at night.

Tanks are being installed to catch rainwater to water the gardens, tropical rain forest and dry rain forest and the early childhood learning centre and prep grounds.

All gardens and fruit and bush tucker trees are mulched.

Water audits of water usage of town water are conducted each term.

Water minimization devices are being installed such as aquacucs and dual toilets.

Taps are monitored regularly for leaks.

Students have initiated steps to become water monitors

Students will begin to be involved in water quality testing.

Students will begin to be involved in water pollution topics.

The College has initiated steps to reduce its water usage by 10% in 2007.

Energy Conservation

Energy conservation is a major issue because of the size of the College's power bill. It has been isolated as a target area separate from resource conservation and waste management.

Regular audits are held of energy usage by reading electricity meters weekly.

Use of air conditioners is monitored weekly.

Steps have been put in place to reduce the usage of electricity.

Lights are not to be turned on and off regularly.

Classroom are to be opened an hour before school starts to take advantage of the natural breeze.

Natural light is to be used as much as possible.

Air conditioners are to be set at 24%.

The College has a policy of reducing its electricity usage by 10% for each quarter in 2007 compared with each quarter in 2006.

Litter Prevention

The College has a litter prevention program of proactive litter management and abatement activities both within and without the College. It also prides itself on the general school cleanliness. This adds to the aesthetic appearance of the College.

Anti-litter activities are included in the strand “Promoting the Health of the Individual and the Community” in the Key Learning Area of Health and Physical Education.

The College has galvanized signed bins to collect litter. These are emptied daily and collected weekly.

Students are encouraged to adopt an attitude of picking up litter when it is seen. They cannot go into class until all litter is collected. Also there are litter monitors who go to set areas to collect litter.

Students are involved in the School Clean Up Australia Day as well as cleaning the roads that form the boundaries of the College once a term as part of the Adopt-A-Road Program. This is a joint partnership with the Burdekin Shire Council and Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland.

Classrooms are cleaned daily.

There is an asset management policy where all buildings are repainted internally and externally every five years.

Protection of the Environment

The College is making a conscious effort to protect the environment of the College when developing its grounds. It also considers the impact these developments have on the Great Barrier Reef.

Projects to protect the environment arise from biblical mandate to be fruitful, multiply and replenish.

It is continually providing more shade areas through planting of shade trees and erection of shade covers. Sails exist over play structures in the kindergarten and prep areas and the fitness stations. Shade structures are presently being erected over the paved areas. Plans are in place to continue erecting more shade structures in 2007 and 2008 around the office area and toilets of the College Hall Building.

Nature reserves of Australian plants have been established.

An exotic fruit orchard has been established.

A bush tucker orchard has been established.

Flower gardens have been established. Small shrubs have been planted.

Organic combination gardens have been established.

Tropical fruit trees have been planted.

Dry rain forest trees have been planted.

Tropical rain forest trees have been planted.

A hydroponic system has been installed.

More exotics fruit trees, bush tucker trees and native Australian flowering trees are to be planted. This includes Melbourne Street as part of the Adopt-A-Road Program with the Burdekin Shire Council.

A frog pond is to be erected in 2006.

A shade house is to be erected and propagation of trees and plants will then commence.

A garden is to be established beneath the Great Barrier Reef Mural.

These projects to protect the environment of the College have enhanced the environment of the College.

School Partnerships

The College has initiated partnerships with other schools, governmental groups, environmental groups and local land owners to promote knowledge and understanding of environmental sustainability issues, to undertake joint environmental issues and to receive recognition for the College's efforts in educating for a sustainable future.

In regard to schools

The College will host youth forums and congresses for schools with environmental programs in the Burdekin as well as develop a local network system to share ideas and work with other schools on joint projects.

It will develop sister school relationships with other schools in Townsville, Queensland, interstate and overseas.

In regard to governmental groups

The College is involved in a range of activities organised by the Burdekin Shire Council. These include local government week.

The College has signed an Adopt-A-Road agreement with the Council and Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland.

Burdekin Shire Council writes letters of support for applications for funding by the College for a range of environmental activities.

The Council supplies trees for environmental days.

The College had adopted a Councillor. She is informed of College activities and represents the Council at official functions.

The College, Burdekin Shire Council and Alva Beach Progress Association submitted a joint submission in the Clean Beach Competition, 2006.

The College has commenced discussion with the Council on a School Safe Program that will include revegetation.

The College has commenced discussion with the Council on an environmental project near the school that includes a wetland.

In regard to environmental groups.

The College is a member of Seed Growers. It can purchase seeds that are not available commercially.

Students of the College have signed a Heritage Bird Protection Certificate with the Gould Group to protect Australian birds.

Students of the College are involved in planting trees with the Lower Burdekin Landcare Group.

The College is a Reef Guardian School. It submits an Annual Reef Guardian Plan outlining its activities in curriculum, resource management, on ground projects and education of the community.

The College submits an annual report of the activities of the plan that have been completed. The report also includes images and supporting testimonials and examples of environmental, economical, social/cultural and educational benefits. The report also includes an outline of future plans as a Reef Guardian School. The College nominates for the following awards:- Reef Guardian Champions Award, Sea Stars Award, Waste Watchers Award, Water Warriors Award, Learning Legends Award, Action and

Adventures Award, Community Connection Award, Habitat Heroes Award, r-Amp It Down Award and Bright Sparks Award.

The College participates in the Comalco Green and Healthy Schools Program organised by Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland. Awards include Eco School Award, School Spirit Award, Litter Prevention Award, Resource Conservation and Waste Management Award, WaterWise Award, School-Local Government Partnership Award, Protection of the Environment Award, Young Legends Award, Health and Nutrition Award, Community Action Award as well as the Green and Healthiest School Award.

In regard to local land owners

The College wishes to form partnerships with local land owners on vegetation projects.

A partnership has been formed with a local land owner at Mount Inkerman to plant trees as part of a salination project and to plant trees around existing wetlands.

Student Leadership

The College believes each student has leadership potential.

Years 4-7 will form an Environmental Council.

Each student will take on one responsibility that arises from this policy.

They will be given a portfolio for their responsibility and report to each meeting of the Council.

Their portfolio will identify potential student communications, both internally and externally, that will publicise or promote activities arising from their responsibility.

Where appropriate they will participate in externally organised activities or projects and may even become members.

Each student will undertake a significant project arising from their portfolio. This project will arise from an environmental issue and follow research guidelines.

They will use the knowledge gained from the project to address bigger picture issues relating to the Great Barrier Reef.

The results of their project will be available on the internet and communicated to GBRMPA and local schools and community members.

Health and Nutrition

Students of the College will be involved in a number of activities that promote good health and nutrition.

In the strand “Promoting the Health of the Individual and the Community” students will be involved in activities that are related to educating for a sustainable future.

Organic combination gardens are grown to produce healthy produce for sale to staff, parents and members of the community and are a source of supply for the tuck shop.

Tuck shop foods follow guidelines in regard to green, yellow and red food.

Health and nutrition slogans are displayed to promote a healthy life style.

Students are involved in health and nutrition related programs such as Healthy Harold, Life Be In It, Fun Run by Golden Circle and Fresh on the Menu by Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland.

Education of the Community

The College has, as one of its marketing strategies, promoting its activities arising from its educating for a sustainable future policy as a means of educating the community about environmental issues.

Letters will be written to the editor of the Ayr Advocate in regard to environmental concerns in the community.

Students, in their role as members of the Environmental Council, will promote environmental issues through an Environmental Council Newsletter.

Each member of the Environmental Council will prepare an environmental brochure arising from their portfolio.

The Reef Guardian Presentation Night is held in term three. Using the Arts and Technology, students inform the parent body, members of the College Board, governmental and Reef HQ representatives, school principals, members of environmental groups and community members an overview of activities arising from the Reef Guardian Action Plan. It concludes with the unveiling of a feature project for the year.

School Spirit

In order to develop character of students which in turn develops school spirit, the College identifies an environmental adversity which students attempt to overcome.

The College seeks to develop in students a positive attitude to overcoming the adversity.

A strategic plan will be developed to address this adversity.

Wherever possible, partnerships will be formed with relevant external bodies to address the adversity.

The College will seek endorsement by members of the wider community in regard to the school's strength in overcoming the adversity.

The contribution of the student who had a significant role in overcoming the adversity will be recognised on presentation night.

Evaluating, Monitoring and Reporting

The College sees evaluating, monitoring and reporting as a fundamental and continuing aspect of its education for a sustainable future program

The College believes measures of success in terms of whether it has an education for a sustainable program include:-

- The School Education Management Plan is part of the strategic plan of the College.
- Action plans as a Reef Guardian School and a Green and Healthy School have been, written and implemented.
- Objectives for all focus areas have been met.
- Progress in meeting the objectives of the focus areas is included in the Annual Report.
- Reef Guardian and Green and Healthy Schools Reports have been submitted.
- The College receives awards as a Reef Guardian School and a Green and Healthy School.
- The College is a model for other schools to follow.