

# Level 1:

## Affirming Ecological Practice



A Level 1 Earthcare School begins the Laudato Si' action journey and commits to its first ecological actions. This is a time to form your Earthcare team, reflect on what the school is already doing, familiarise your Earthcare team with the process, start to create your vision and carry out your first audit.

A Level 1 Earthcare School:

- Has [registered](#) as a Catholic Earthcare Australia (CEA) School
- Understands the Catholic Earthcare Australia (CEA) change process called the “eight steps to ecological dialogue”
- Starts exploring organisations that can support the journey from across the diocese, local networks, organisations, and Sustainable School programs
- Has begun their Level 1 journey with the goal of moving to Level 2 quickly within the same year.

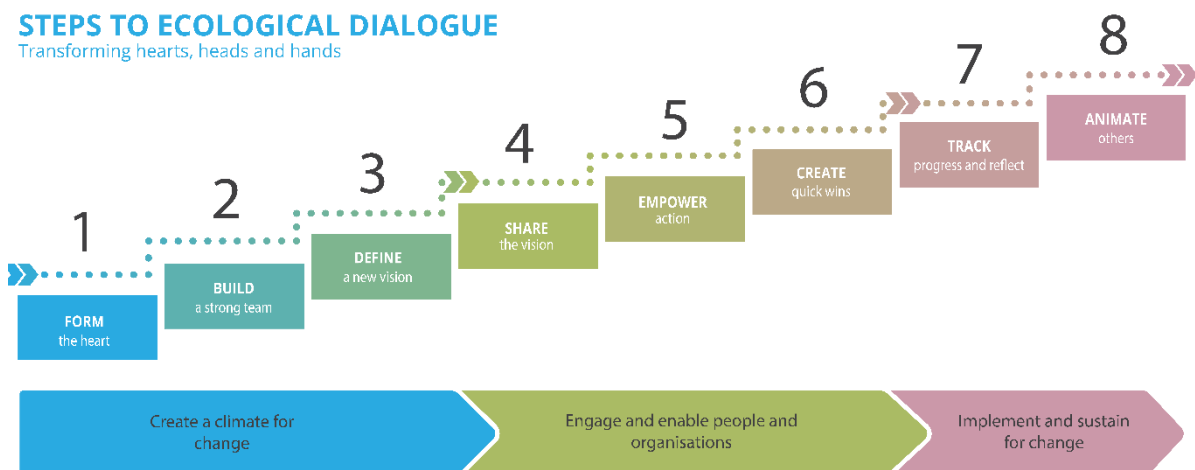
Catholic Earthcare Australia offers the following tools for you to [download](#) and use, as you begin your Earthcare journey:

- A User Guide to Earthcare Schools Documents and Levels
- Earthcare Schools Program ‘Certification Criteria Matrix’.
- Catholic Earthcare Australia 'Steps to Ecological Dialogue’.

There **are no documents to submit to Earthcare for this level.**

### STEPS TO ECOLOGICAL DIALOGUE

Transforming hearts, heads and hands



Developed by Caritas Australia, based on John Kotter's 8 Step Process for Leading Change

Using the Steps to Ecological Dialogue as a framework, these are the typical actions you could implement in your school at Level 1.

## 1. Form the Heart

*Using education and spirituality to come to see, know and love creation as God does.*

- Promote student's understanding of the theological imperative to care for our common home and are familiar with *Laudato Si'* and the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform goals.
- Include an understanding of First Nations perspectives with regards to caring for Country within your local context.

## 2. Build a Strong Team

*Create a team that represents all community stakeholders and are committed to engaging and enabling change.*

- Form an Earthcare team.
- Ensure all stakeholders are represented on your team.
- Identify the Earthcare coordinator for your school.
- The Earthcare Student committee meets to start planning the school's *Laudato Si'* journey.

## 3. Define a New Vision

*Establish how things should be in the future by developing a plan via an auditing process and reflecting on the 7 *Laudato Si'* goals.*

- Ensure students are actively involved and 'given a voice' in defining a new vision.
- Consider the *Laudato Si'* goals when defining your new vision.
- Reflect on what the school is currently doing concerning *Laudato Si'* and sustainability, you may choose to build on an existing project.

## 4. Share the Vision

*Explain the importance of caring for our common home to build followers across your community.*

- Communicate the vision and plan
- Inform your school community of your proposed journey, including displaying your Earthcare certificate in the main reception area and on your website, social media etc.
- Celebrate your Earthcare journey.

## 5. Empower Action

*Empower your supporters by giving members of the team tasks and responsibilities that work to their strengths.*

- Demonstrate how actions are aligned to the charism and vision of the school as well as the *Laudato Si'* goals. (You can use this in your reflection on the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform.)

## 6. Create Quick Wins

*Establish achievable goals to motivate people.*

- Build momentum 'early and often'
- Choose achievable goals by picking the low hanging fruit i.e., demonstrate quick achievements and their meaning to your mission to build momentum.
- Celebrate 'quick wins'.
- Recognise and reward people involved in the process.
- Identify an obvious issue or theme to work with, going forward.

## 7. Track Progress and Reflect

*Measure and evaluate to inform the way forward.*

- Register on the Laudato Si' Action Platform at <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>  
Upload a reflection **if you wish.**
- Audit current practices: how does the audit inform your choice of Earthcare project? Include this audit baseline data in the Level 2 Audit sent to Earthcare.

## 8. Animate Others

*Celebrate achievements and build the network by animating others.*

- The school at this stage understands the change process required for student-led campaigns to 'animate others.'

If you are confident that you know how the Earthcare process works and you have started your first sustainability project, contact the Earthcare Schools Coordinator to discuss moving to the next level.

**Ready for Level Two?** Look at the level two guide and begin implementing the suggested actions.

If you need guidance and support at any stage, contact the Earthcare Schools Coordinator [gwen.michener@caritas.org.au](mailto:gwen.michener@caritas.org.au)