

Climate literacy in 2026 - what are BCE students learning about our world?

Climate Literacy – it is a term increasingly used across education systems worldwide. Leaving many to wonder what climate literacy actually means, how it is taught, and why is it emerging as a vital part of a contemporary education?

In a faith-filled learning community like Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE), climate literacy goes even further, inviting students to recognise their responsibility to 'Care for Our Common Home,' the call of the late Pope Francis when he penned his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. This *Laudato Si'* Week (17 to 24 May), we hear from Star of the Sea Primary School, Cleveland, Year 4 teacher Alli May, who gives insight into how climate literacy is being brought to life at her school.

So, what are BCE students learning about our world?

Alli said climate literacy learning at Star of the Sea Primary School begins as early as Prep, laying the foundation that grows throughout a student's schooling.

"From the Foundation years, students are introduced to the idea that the world is God's creation and that caring for our world is part of their responsibility as people of faith," she said.

"Grounded in Catholic Social Teaching and the call of *Laudato Si'*, this learning empowers students to realise that everyday choices, both big and small, can help protect and sustain our planet.

"As students grow, they gain a deeper awareness of the interconnectedness of our ecosystems, the impact of human actions, and their shared responsibility to sustain our common home.

"This approach nurtures not only knowledge, but instils a lifelong commitment to stewardship in students, forming them into global citizens who give back to their community and environment."

Learning that leads to action

Alli that adds this learning is not just theory, it extends beyond the classroom as well.

"Students are supported to apply their understanding in practical, meaningful ways within our school and broader community," she said.

"At Star of the Sea, we have a dedicated EcoWarriors team of students from Year 3 to Year 6 who meet each week," Alli said.

"Each Friday, these students work together to keep our school environment beautiful."

The Eco Warriors team lead hands-on sustainability initiatives, including Containers for Change, collecting and recycling paper and cardboard across the school, and ensuring waste, including food wrappers, is placed in the correct bins.

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"Through these regular routines, students develop a strong sense of responsibility and ownership over sustainable practices," Alli said.

"Our EcoWarriors program also sees students engage school families in important environmental initiatives that support local wildlife."

Learning by doing

Alli said climate literacy is strengthened through experiential, hands-on learning.

"Students apply environmental learning through making and designing," Alli said, pointing to initiatives such as the school's 'Design a Bee Hotel' competition run for World Bee Day.

These experiences allow students to test ideas, collaborate with peers and see how small, local actions can create meaningful environmental impact.

From classrooms to changemakers

This focus on innovation and problem solving is reflected across the BCE system through initiatives such as STEM 'Make a Difference' (MAD) competition, where students are encouraged to design and showcase inventions that make a difference in the world.

Through STEM MAD, students are empowered to identify real world problems and develop creative, student designed solutions, many of which focus on environmental sustainability, conservation and climate action.

By combining STEM knowledge with ethical decision making and creativity, students see themselves not just as learners but as active changemakers capable of shaping a more sustainable future.

A growing sense of hope

As Laudato Si' Week encourages reflection on environmental challenges, teachers across BCE are seeing optimism emerge through student engagement and leadership.

For Alli, hope is evident in the increasing number of students eager to take responsibility for environmental action.

"Hope is visible in the level of student participation we have with our EcoWarriors program," she said.

"Each year we are gaining more interest from our students who wish to join, with almost a 50 per cent increase this year compared to last."

For more information about Star of the Sea Primary School, Cleveland or to enrol [click here](#).

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About Laudato Si' Week 2026

BCE media release



Laudato Si' Week 2026 invites us to move from hope to action. Hope is not passive; it is lived and shared through daily choices, community life, prayer, and concrete acts of care.

This year reminds us that ecological conversion grows step by step, through relationships restored, creation protected, and communities strengthened.

The next chapter of Laudato Si' begins with us, wherever we are.