



Living Care: Action Plan for People and Planet 2024-2027

Acknowledgement of Country

Southern Cross Care (NSW & ACT) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we work and live. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We believe that a better understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures will assist us to better engage with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents/clients and staff. An enriched appreciation of Australia's long cultural heritage is essential to the maturity of Australia as a nation.



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Our Laudato Si' Action Plan

At Southern Cross Care, NSW & ACT (SCC), our mission is deeply intertwined with the core principles of social justice and environmental stewardship, as reflected in our Laudato Si' Action Plan, which draws inspiration from Pope Francis's transformative 2015 encyclical, Laudato Si'.

Pope Francis encourages us to view the world through a lens of respect and to develop a way of life that is in harmony with all living beings. It poignantly highlights the interconnectedness of our challenges:

"We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature." (Laudato Si' #139).

In alignment with the global Catholic Church's vision, we answer Pope Francis's call through our Action Plan, targeting seven pivotal objectives that integrate our environmental efforts with our social initiatives. This Plan not only amplifies our ongoing commitments to environmental sustainability, social equity, and the wellbeing of our staff, residents, and clients but also embodies the integrated approach advocated by Laudato Si'.

Core Areas of Focus

Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, our Action Plan underscores our commitment to key organisational objectives, including:

- SCC Strategic Plan 2021-2024
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-2025
- Modern Slavery Action Plan
- Investment Policy

These documents serve as blueprints for our detailed strategies aimed at fulfilling the objectives set forth in our Laudato Si' Action Plan.

Structure and Scope

We've focused on the most crucial tasks, knowing that many of them help us meet several goals at once.

This Plan covers all aspects of our operations – from our offices and aged care facilities to the communal environments of our retirement communities and the operation of our service vehicles. We have clearly defined the scope to ensure focused and measurable impacts, mindful of the areas outside our immediate control.

Commitment to Transparency and Accountability

We voluntarily commit to transparently reporting our Greenhouse Gas Emissions. This pledge reflects our dedication to environmental accountability and our proactive stance in mitigating the impacts of climate change on our community. By reporting annually, we align our actions with the larger, global effort to foster a sustainable and just future, honouring the spirit of Laudato Si'.

With this Plan, we embrace the comprehensive vision outlined by Pope Francis, dedicating ourselves to fostering a world where care for our common home and mutual respect shape all our actions.

Response to the Cry of the Earth



Our focus

Responding to the Cry of the Earth means protecting and nurturing the natural environment for present and future generations. This involves tackling the climate crisis, preserving biodiversity, and progressing ecological sustainability.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us of our profound connection with nature: ***“Our Sister, Mother Earth ... now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will.”*** (*Laudato Si'* #2)

Pope Francis challenges us to consider, ***“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?”*** (*Laudato Si'* #160). This reflection is central to our commitment, inspiring us to act with compassion and foresight.

	SCC Goals	Target	Date	Responsibility
1.a	Achieve measurable progress against publicly committed targets.	Identify and implement one key environmental project annually.	End of each calendar year	CEO
1.b	Endorse and adopt portfolio-wide strategy for improving biodiversity at all sites.	Develop biodiversity enhancement plans for each site.	2026	Property
1.c	Evaluate existing land holdings to explore greening/biodiverse principles.	Complete a biodiversity assessment for all land holdings.	2026	Property
1.d	Encourage sites to participate in Clean Up Australia Day and local Landcare initiatives.	80% of sites participate in one local environmental initiative per year.	2026	People & Culture, Marketing
1.e	Maximise the recycling of appropriate garden and organic waste into mulch and compost.	Achieve 75% recycling rate for garden/organic waste.	2027	Property, Care Operations

Response to the Cry of the Poor



Our focus

The Cry of the Poor reveals a stark reality: the least responsible for environmental harm are most vulnerable to its consequences. This calls for a profound response - to fight disadvantage and injustice in all its forms.

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* compels us: ***"A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings. It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted."*** (*Laudato Si'* #91).

He re-minds us, ***"When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person... it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected."*** (*Laudato Si'* #117). This perspective challenges us to foster a holistic approach that recognises the inherent link between human and environmental wellbeing.

	SCC Goals	Target	Date	Responsibility
2.a	Measure the percentage of SCC aged care residents/clients who identify as having characteristics within the Dept of Health 'diversity framework'.	Increase diverse representation by 30%.	2026	People & Culture
2.b	All SCC Residential Aged Care Facilities have at least 30% of concessional residents.	Maintain a minimum of 30% concessional residency.	2026	Care Operations
2.c	Average star rating of SCC Residential Aged Care Facilities greater than 3 stars.	Maintain a minimum of 3-star rating across all services.	2027	Care Operations
2.d	Average of 8 Engagement Opportunities per month per resident across all SCC Residential Aged Care Facilities.	Measure participation across engagement programs.	2024	Care Operations, Lifestyle & Engagement
2.e	SCC staff enjoy a safe and nurturing workplace.	Deliver at least 80% staff satisfaction score. Less than 30% employee turnover*.	2026	People & Culture, Care Operations

*Noting industry workforce shortages.

	SCC Goals	Target	Date	Responsibility
2.f	Establish and measure a career support and development program for leaders, and for staff across SCC.	Measure career progression and staff retention across SCC.	2025	People & Culture
2.g	Develop, and begin implementing, Reconciliation Action Plan as a means of assisting First Nations people access to employment, aged care services or business opportunities with SCC.	Initiate and implement Reconciliation Action Plan.	2025	People & Culture
2.h	Build on and expand on Modern Slavery information on the SCC intranet (MS 2023 objective 1).	Update and enhance Modern Slavery content on the intranet.	2024	Procurement
2.i	Attend monthly Modern Slavery ACAN webinars (MS 2023 objective 4).	Ensure consistent attendance and participation.	Monthly	Procurement
2.j	Continue to educate and train SCC staff to understand and recognise the signs of Modern Slavery (MS 2023 objective 5).	Deliver ongoing training programs.	2025	People & Culture, Procurement
2.k	Remind SCC staff about SCC's commitment and obligations under the Modern Slavery Act (MS 2023 objective 7).	Conduct regular awareness sessions.	Bi-annually	People & Culture, Procurement
2.l	Include a Modern Slavery segment in the annual SCC conference (MS 2023 objective 8).	Include Modern Slavery segment in the conference agenda.	Annual	Care Operations, Procurement
2.m	Attend quarterly Modern Slavery Steering Committee meetings (MS 2023 objective 9).	Ensure representation at all quarterly meetings.	Quarterly	Procurement
2.n	Encourage staff and resident participation in "Australia's Biggest Morning Tea" and other charity fundraising activities.	Increase participation in fundraising events by 20%.	Annually	Marketing, Care Operations, People & Culture

Response to the call for Ecological Economics



Our focus

Ecological Economics transforms our approach to production and consumption, fostering healing, health, and liberation for every part of creation - plants, animals, and people alike.

Viewing nature merely as a commodity for profit leads to grave societal consequences, perpetuating inequality, injustice, and violence. This exploitative view places resources in the hands of a few, contradicting the principles of harmony, justice, solidarity, and peace advocated by Jesus. (Laudato Si' #82).

Pope Francis reminds us, *"Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act."* (Laudato Si' #206). This perspective calls us to consider the broader implications of our economic actions on the global community and our common home.

	SCC Goals	Target	Date	Responsibility
3.a	Create and communicate a Supplier Country Risk Classification (MS 2023 objective 2).	Develop a risk classification system for suppliers.	2024	Procurement
3.b	Ask our top 50 suppliers by spend to review and sign SCC's Modern Slavery Attestation Statement (MS 2023 objective 2).	Achieve 100% review completion from top 50 suppliers. Achieve 100% supplier agreement from top 50 suppliers.	2026	Procurement
3.c	Provide SCC's Supplier Code of Conduct to our supplier base and require feedback (MS 2023 objective 5).	Distribute and collect feedback on Supplier Code of Conduct.	2024	Procurement
3.d	Develop a strategic partnership with a current vendor for a joint initiative to help combat Modern Slavery (MS 2023 objective 9).	Form a strategic partnership and initiate a joint project.	2025	CEO, Procurement
3.e	Include relevant SCC stakeholders in vendor reviews and include Modern Slavery as an area of discussion (MS 2023 objective 10).	Incorporate Modern Slavery topics into vendor reviews.	2025	Procurement

	SCC Goals	Target	Date	Responsibility
3.f	Sustainability performance standards for major procurement categories (ES Procurement target 1).	Establish performance standards for sustainability.	2025	Procurement
3.g	The Finance Department will progress to paperless (ES Procurement target 2).	50% of customer statements are online.	2026	Finance, Marketing
3.h	Sustainability design guidelines incorporated into the development pipeline (ES Development target 3).	Integrate sustainability guidelines into all projects.	2026	Property, Procurement, Care Operations
3.i	All new Residential Aged Care Facilities and Retirement Living Units designs to involve Sustainability Design consultants (ES Development target 1).	Consult with Sustainability Design experts for new projects.	2027	Property
3.j	At least one new building developed or refurbished with a Green Star Rating (4 stars or higher) and/or NABERS rating (5 stars or higher) (ES Development target 2).	Obtain Green Star or NABERS rating for new building.	2027	Property
3.k	Review environmental component of the Ethical Investment considerations for SCC investments (IP).	Review and update Ethical Investment criteria.	2025	Finance

Response to the call for Sustainable Lifestyle



Our focus

Embracing a sustainable lifestyles means adopting a philosophy of using only the resources necessary for our needs, guided by the ethos 'we live simply so that all may simply live'. This concept isn't just about personal restraint; it's a commitment to global equity and environmental respect.

Pope Francis emphasises this in *Laudato Si'*, urging us to recognise the severity of our current ecological and cultural crises. He calls for a transformational shift towards new habits that reflect our care for the planet and each other. ***"An awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits."*** (*Laudato Si'* #209).

The journey towards sustainable living challenges us to rethink our values, our consumption, and our impact, paving the way for a more equitable and sustainable world for all life forms.

	SCC Goals	Target	Date	Responsibility
4.a	Over 25% of our electricity consumption sourced from renewable energy (ES Energy target 1).	Contract 25% of energy from renewable sources 1. Large markets 2. Small markets.	1. 2025 2. 2026	Procurement
4.b	Transition Residential homes to full electric hot water systems.	Two Residential homes transitioned.	2027	Procurement, Property
4.c	Reduce grid electricity consumption.	25% reduction compared to FY19.	2027	Procurement, Property
4.d	Reduce utility energy consumption.	20% reduction compared to FY19.	2027	Procurement, Property
4.e	Where viable, transition ageing fleet to more fuel-efficient vehicles, and commence trial of electric vehicles.	15% reduction in fleet fuel consumption.	2027	Procurement
4.f	Conduct a portfolio wide waste system review.	Create sustainable measures	2025	Procurement
4.g	100% of all flights incurred by staff are carbon neutral (ES Transport target 2).	All staff flights carbon neutral.	2027	Procurement, Travel Admin

Response to the call for Ecological Education



Our focus

Ecological Education is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology in order to foster ecological awareness and transformative action.

Pope Francis emphasises the interconnectedness of all forms of life: ***“Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another.” (Laudato Si’ #42).***

Pope Francis also underscores the need for personal and collective transformation: ***“Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change.” (Laudato Si’ #202).*** This educational approach inspires us to reconsider our relationship with nature and to act with a renewed sense of responsibility towards our planet and each other.

	SCC Goals	Target	Date	Responsibility
5.a	100% of all operational staff have been trained in energy-efficient practices (ES Energy target 3).	Complete staff training programs on energy efficiency.	2025	People & Culture
5.b	Establish driver education program.	100% of SCC fleet drivers completed the program.	2025	People & Culture

Response to the call for Ecological Spirituality



Our focus

Ecological Spirituality emerges from a profound transformation, leading us to “discover God in all things” - not only in the splendour of nature but also in the struggles of the afflicted, reminding us that spiritual life is deeply linked to the fabric of our earthly existence.

Pope Francis conveys this with clarity: *“The Creator can say to each one of us: ‘Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you’ (Jer 1:5). Each of us originates from the heart of God, making ‘each of us the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary.’” (Laudato Si’ #39).*

He reflects on the significance of every creature: *“While recognising every human as an image of God, we must also understand that each creature serves a specific purpose. Nothing in creation is superfluous. The whole material world narrates God’s love, his extensive tenderness for us. Soil, water, mountains are expressions of God’s caress.” (Laudato Si’ #84).*

He extends this concept to the collective journey of all creation: *“The final destiny of other creatures is not found in us. Instead, every being progresses together with us towards a mutual end, which is God.” (Laudato Si’ #83).*

Francis also warns of the dangers of disconnection: *“If we confront nature and the environment without a sense of awe and wonder, if our relationship with the world loses the language of fraternity and beauty, we become nothing more than masters, consumers, and ruthless exploiters, incapable of recognising our own needs’ limits. On the other hand, if we understand ourselves as intimately connected with all that exists, temperance and care emerge spontaneously.” (Laudato Si’ #11).* This profound perspective encourages us to foster a spirituality that honours and protects all facets of creation, guiding us towards a more heartfelt and sustainable relationship with the Earth.

	SCC Goals	Target	Date	Responsibility
6.a	Circulate appropriate prayer/ reflection resources for use during: Laudato Si’ Week (19-26 May), World Environment Day (05 June) ‘Season of Creation’ (01 Sept to 04 Oct).	Provide annual resources for Laudato Si’ Week.	2024	Marketing
6.b	Review pastoral and volunteering program.	Increase pastoral and volunteer base by 10%	2026	Lifestyle & Engagement, People & Culture

Response to the call for Community Engagement



Our focus

Tackling the root causes of social inequality requires changes to our social policies, laws, and customs. It is crucial to involve the community, particularly those most impacted, to ensure sustainable and broadly supported reforms.

This shared journey towards overcoming disadvantage is not just about amending policies but about transforming hearts and communities. Engaging with those affected brings authenticity and depth to our efforts, weaving a fabric of solidarity that supports and uplifts everyone. By embedding the spirit of togetherness and responsibility highlighted by Pope Francis, we move closer to a society where every individual is valued and empowered. This transformation is built on the foundation of compassion, respect, and a deep-seated belief in our collective power to effect positive change.

Pope Francis inspires action with these words: ***"We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it."*** (*Laudato Si'* #229). This calls for a collective commitment to foster an environment where equity and justice prevail, highlighting the importance of mutual support and the value of integrity in our collective journey towards a better world.

	SCC Goals	Target	Date	Responsibility
7.a	Engage with Catholic Health Australia, Aged & Community Care Providers Association and other relevant organisation to advocate for better services and conditions for older people.	Establish a formal partnership and launch a joint initiative for senior care.	2026	CEO
7.b	Develop the skills and confidence of older people within SCC Consumer Advisory Bodies (CAB).	Establish and develop a program for CAB members.	2026	People & Culture, Company Secretary, CAB Chair

Canticle of Creation

(St Francis of Assisi, 1181-1226)

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessing.
To you, alone, Most High, do they belong.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord
Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he
is beautiful and radiant in all his splendour! Of you, Most High, he bears
the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars;
in the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms,
and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water;
she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful,
and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth,
who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with coloured
flowers and herbs.

Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of you;
through those who endure sickness and trial.
Happy those who endure in peace, for by you, Most High,
they will be crowned.

Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whose embrace no living person can escape.
Happy those she finds doing your most holy will.







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