



INSTITUTE OF
SISTERS of MERCY
OF AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

An Integrated Approach to Sustainable Living





Purpose

This document presents the policy position for an integrated approach to sustainable living for the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG). For the purpose of this document, sustainable living is understood as living within Earth's capacity. Included is a policy statement, guiding principles and overarching objectives which outline ISMAPNG's commitment to environmental sustainability and is intended to provide a policy framework for 'whole of Institute' approach to sustainable living.

Rationale

We, as members of the Institute, are committed to respond to global issues of injustice and to address these with a profound belief in the worth and dignity of all life that comes from the interrelatedness of God, Earth and people in one community of creation. Currently our world is challenged by the devastating reality that two-thirds of the global population lives in hunger, poverty and disadvantage and our planet is threatened as never before with mass destruction of all its life-forms. We are also aware that the poor of the world are disproportionately affected by this destruction.

ISMAPNG, in the spirit of our Constitutions, affirms Pope Francis' appeal to the peoples of the world to undergo an 'ecological conversion', first called for by Pope St John Paul II, whereby the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in (our) relationship with the world around us. We recognise that the planet is faced with global deterioration and destruction at an unprecedented rate and avow that "(l)iving our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue: it is not an optional extra or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience" (Laudato Si 217). It arises out of our contemplative stance towards the mystery of God as revealed in the on-going story of the universe.

The mission statement of ISMAPNG is as follows:

Mercy impels us to extravagant hospitality, compassion, and justice in the earth community, being shattered by displacement.
(Chapter Statement 2011, ISMAPNG)

Sustainable living, and the spirituality and theology which underpin this, align with our mercy values as evidenced in our Constitutions that state: "We know that as members of the earth community, we are integrally connected with each other and with the whole of creation" (Const 2. 02). This knowledge is vital if we are to care for our common home, "a care which breaks with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness". (Pope Francis: Eighth Work of Mercy). This policy seeks to enable the whole Institute to respond to Pope Francis' call to give witness through the values that are evident in the very fabric of the Institute and the lives of its members.

Scope

The policy statement, guiding principles and overarching objectives apply across the whole of the Institute and its ministries. It aims to guide all those involved to develop measurable targets (outputs and outcomes) supported by actions (policies, programs and procedures) which align with our commitment to an integrated approach to sustainable living.

Policy statement

ISMAPNG is committed to promoting and adopting an integrated approach to sustainable living across the whole Institute to respect, reverence, conserve and renew our global environment.

Guiding principles

Our approach to this policy incorporates the following guiding principles developed in the light of the values articulated in the rationale.

1

We will work collaboratively with relevant partners to identify opportunities at the local, national and global level.

2

Any changes we implement will be appropriate and practical and informed by contemporary scientific knowledge.

3

We will regularly measure and monitor our impact.

4

We will share our knowledge and experience across the Institute and with others.



Objectives

We aim to achieve sustainable living across seven key areas – energy, water, waste, transport, procurement, investment and infrastructure. Personnel and ministry partners across ISMAPNG are responsible for developing measurable targets which align with some or all of the objectives, as appropriate for their operations.



Energy

Minimise energy emissions by increasing energy efficiency and adopting renewable energy sources where possible.



Water

Minimise water consumption and reduce water wastage.



Waste

Reduce waste to landfill through waste management strategies.



Transport

Choose transport and travel options which minimise greenhouse gas emissions.



Procurement

Consider environmental impact in the purchase and use of goods and services.



Investment

Manage investments and make investment decisions to support our commitment to sustainable living.



Infrastructure

Adopt sustainable design principles for new buildings and amend existing infrastructure to meet energy, water and waste objectives where possible.

Policies, Programs, Procedures

Our sustainable living policy provides a framework for personnel and ministry partners to develop policies, programs and procedure which will contribute to achieving our overarching objectives. The policies, programs and procedures may relate to:

- **Activities and operations:** The activities and operations undertaken in association with the Institute by personnel and ministry partners.
- **Education and formation:** Education and formation programs led by ISMAPNG.
- **Advocacy:** Advocating for the whole of the Earth community.

Figure 1 Framework for an integrated approach to sustainable living.

