

# Mercedes takes a shine to solar energy

Mercedes College has harnessed the power of the sun to reduce its carbon footprint through a major contract with Tindo Power.

The Catholic college in Springfield recently switched its power supply over to 288 solar panels to generate about 12 per cent of the school's electricity each year.

The system will be at its most efficient in the middle of February when its peak generation capacity is as much as 15 per cent of the College's needs, right at the time when it requires it most to run air-conditioning systems on hot afternoons.

The Power Purchase Agreement with Tindo Power to install the 72 kW Solar System was the first agreement of its size between a school and the SA-owned solar company.

"We are passionate about ecological sustainability and want to be a leader in actively minimising our carbon footprint," said Mercedes College principal Peter Daw.

"We believe that it is possible to be environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and financially prudent



**CLEAN POWER: (L-R) Mercedes College students Sophie Smith and Alexander Diamond are learning first-hand about renewable energy sources through the school's purchase of 288 solar panels.**

while offering our students educational opportunities in relation to learning about

renewable energy sources," he said.

Mr Daw said the power purchase

agreement with Tindo added to the college's previous major water retention project developed in 2009. Mercedes is also rolling out a plan to replace all lights with long-life LED globes throughout the College to reduce energy consumption and maintenance costs.

"We are very proud to partner with Mercedes College and congratulate them for their progressive approach to clean sustainable energy supplies," said Adrian Ferraretto, founder of Tindo Solar.

The agreement is delivered using Tindo Solar panels, made at Australia's only solar panel manufacturing facility at Mawson Lakes.

"Tindo's Power Purchase Agreement business was launched in July 2014 with the backing of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and to date Tindo Power has customers in the education, hospitality, manufacturing and leisure sectors across Australia," Mr Ferraretto said.

"We believe this new way of delivering solar power will allow many more Australian homes and businesses to adopt renewable energy which in turn will support Australian jobs and our environment."

# Blackfriars Priory is turning green

Blackfriars Priory School students are hoping to turn a rocky garden bed into a flourishing piece of land sprouting edible indigenous plants as part of an ongoing school-wide conversion to ecological sustainability.

The all-boys school of 1000 students is developing the "sacred garden" at their Prospect campus this year as more and more Catholic schools across the State embrace the environmental focus of the Church's past three Popes.

The garden will include vegetables, fruit trees and indigenous plants. The school's

Indigenous Focus Group last month began selecting the indigenous plants and trees that could be included.

Meanwhile Year 12 students will play an integral part in the design and construction of the project as part of the Religious Education curriculum.

Blackfriars Living Catholic key teacher Oreste Farrugia said established rose gardens at the school would make way for the new sacred space, giving students a hands-on education in environmental care and permaculture.

"Students will learn that we are all

connected now and forever to God's creation," said Mr Farrugia.

"The garden will combine our call to be 'stewards of creation' with the permaculture principles of caring for people, caring for the earth and sharing the surplus," he said.

Mr Farrugia said students from the early learning centre through to Year 12, parents, old scholars and staff would be involved in preparing the garden beds, planting, harvesting and cooking.

He said harvested produce would be donated or sold, with generated funds

returned to sustain the project. He said students could also use the garden's produce to prepare soup for those in need.

The garden's first vegetables are expected around spring.

Earlier this year, Blackfriars joined the Ecological Conversion: Faith in Action Inquiry Project and Network – an initiative of the Catholic Education Office to encourage and support ecological program and activities. More than 20 primary and secondary Catholic schools are part of the network.

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Tindo Solar panels are made in Australia, by Australians, for Australian conditions.



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**SACRED CONNECTION: (L-R) Blackfriars Priory School students Vinnie Lazzaro and Haymish Smith, with Living Catholic key teacher Oreste Farrugia, will help design the edible indigenous component of the school's new sacred garden.**



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 1300 846 367  
 info@tindosolar.com  
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