



Australian Government

**Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts**



LIVING SUSTAINABLY

The Australian Government's National Action Plan
for Education for Sustainability

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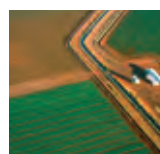
ABOUT THIS PLAN

Living Sustainably: the Australian Government's National Action Plan for Education for Sustainability has been prepared in conjunction with the National Council on Education for Sustainability by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

The council is a non-statutory body providing expert advice to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts and the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts on needs and priorities of education for sustainability activities and issues in Australia.

This is Australia's second national action plan. It builds on the foundation laid by the first plan released in 2000 and represents a significant contribution to Australia's participation in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014.

Part 1 of the document sets out the work to date on education for sustainability in Australia, the present situation and the issues to be addressed over the coming years. Part 2 comprises the plan's vision and mission, with strategies and actions to achieve the plan's objectives.



OVERVIEW

Australia is fortunate to have a rich cultural and natural heritage, social stability, a strong democratic political system, and the resources to support economic prosperity. The future, however, holds many challenges which must be faced if we are to continue to prosper. The available evidence suggests that in many areas our current way of living cannot be sustained.

The importance of education in general to the well-being and prosperity of any society is well recognised. The principles and practical application of 'education for sustainability' are less well understood but have, in recent years, been recognised internationally as

fundamentally important to addressing the critical global challenges we all face. Through information and awareness, but more importantly by building people's capacity to innovate and implement solutions, education for sustainability is essential to re-orienting the way we live and work and to Australia becoming a sustainable society.

Australia's approach to education for sustainability has come a long way since its origins in environmental education in the 1970s. It has evolved from a focus on awareness of natural ecosystems and their degradation to equipping all people with



the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to make decisions based upon a consideration of their full environmental, social and economic implications.

The diversity of sources providing education for sustainability has also grown in this time. Providers include governments, educational institutions at all levels, industry bodies, professional associations, non-government organisations, community groups, zoos, national parks, aquaria and environmental education centres.

Since 2000, initiatives such as the establishment of the National Environmental Education Council, the National Environmental Education Network¹ and the National Education for Sustainability Research Program (see Box 3) have significantly raised the profile

and effectiveness of community education and helped position it as an essential component of national policy on the environment and sustainability.

Given the scale, complexity and immediacy of issues such as climate change, water security and pollution, a strengthened and better coordinated national effort on education for sustainability is now needed. This national action plan has been developed to address that need following an extensive community consultation process in 2007–08.

The aim of the plan is to equip all Australians with the knowledge and skills required to live sustainably. It sets out a framework for national action that adopts the following four strategies to respond to the needs and priorities of education for sustainability.



¹ Newly constituted as the National Council on Education for Sustainability, & National Education for Sustainability Network.

1. 'Demonstrating Australian Government leadership' aims to strengthen the government's leadership role in education for sustainability as an exemplar for change through its own policies, programs and operations and by promoting system-wide change through greater coordination and collaboration with state, territory and local governments.
2. 'Reorienting education systems to sustainability' focuses on achieving a culture of sustainability in which teaching and learning for sustainability are reinforced by continuous improvement in the sustainability of campus management.
3. 'Fostering sustainability in business and industry' will build capacity in business and industry to plan for sustainability, adopt appropriate frameworks and tools, and harness incentives for change such as improved efficiencies, cost savings, corporate reputation, and staff morale and retention.
4. 'Harnessing community spirit to act' emphasises collaboration with the many diverse providers of education for sustainability to help improve community and practitioners' access to knowledge and tools. It also supports research to better understand issues, attitudes and behaviour.

Under these strategies, actions are identified for which the Australian Government will take responsibility, providing national leadership and encouragement for action by others. These actions include promoting sustainability throughout the national training system; supporting whole-of-institution change for sustainability in universities; forming partnerships with industry bodies and professional associations to develop and deliver workplace learning for sustainability; and working with local governments

to improve their capacity to engage in best practice community education for sustainability.

Recognising the breadth of actions included in the plan, the government will work with the newly constituted National Council on Education for Sustainability to identify priority actions for early implementation.

Underlying this plan is an emphasis on a whole-of-government approach and setting up partnerships and links within and between the government, industry and community sectors. Similarly, the plan recognises the need to integrate education for sustainability in Australia with other policy measures, including economic/market-based instruments, legislation and technology, to promote a sustainable society.



PART 1

THE CHALLENGE: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

In global terms, Australians enjoy an enviable quality of life. Our nation has a unique and diverse environment, social stability and a strong democratic heritage, and the resources for economic prosperity. However, there are many challenges which must be faced now if we are to continue to prosper. Global issues including climate change, biodiversity loss, growth in population, poverty, competition for finite resources, rapidly changing technology and geopolitical instability make the 21st century unique.

Reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Stern Review², Millennium Ecosystem Assessment³, and Australia's own State of the Environment reports highlight the consequences of a range of critical global and national trends and their potential impact on current and future generations.

In a globalised world, individual actions have implications well beyond their immediate surroundings and issues such as climate change, water shortages and biodiversity loss can no longer be seen in isolation from each other or the wider context in which they occur. Global efforts to engage with threats to economic stability, environmental damage and a growing number of social issues present clear signs that current global trends are

unsustainable. Action is needed now to create a sustainable future, protect our way of life and preserve the integrity of Australia's biodiversity and ecosystems.

An holistic approach to decision-making is required for a community to be sustainable. In particular the interconnected nature of social, economic and environmental issues needs to be recognised and acted upon.

A vision of what sort of community we are trying to work towards is also required. Some of the characteristics of a sustainable community are listed in Box 1.



² Stern, N. (2007) *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

³ Reid, W.V. and Mooney, H.A. et al. (2005) *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Synthesis Report*. Island Press, Washington.

WHAT DOES A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY LOOK LIKE?

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs⁴.

An holistic approach to decision-making is required for a community to be sustainable. In particular the interconnected nature of social, economic and environmental issues needs to be recognised and acted upon.

Vision is a vital step in the policy process. If we don't know where we want to go, it is difficult to measure progress or inspire and motivate change. It is often easier to know what we want to avoid—for example, biodiversity loss, pollution and waste—than to know what we are trying to sustain.

Sustainability encompasses the notion of intergenerational equity and asks us not only to think more broadly about the impacts of our actions but also to make decisions for the long term.

While no country is presently living in a way that is sustainable, there are many examples of individuals, companies and governments working to take into account the full social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

With these issues in mind we can begin to imagine what a sustainable community might look like and the sort of attitudes, behaviour and values we should be striving for. As listed in various sustainability charters and action programs they include:

- integrating environmental, social and economic goals in policies and activities
- dealing cautiously with risk, uncertainty and irreversibility
- ensuring intergenerational equity
- recognising the global dimension
- appropriately valuing, appreciating and restoring nature
- conserving biodiversity and ecological integrity
- ensuring no net loss of human or natural capital
- providing for equal opportunity and community participation
- committing to best practice
- committing to continuous improvement, and
- recognising the need for good governance.

Different people will have different views on what a sustainable community looks like.

A broad answer to the question however is that a sustainable community is one which enjoys:

- healthy ecosystems
- social well-being and cohesion, and
- a prosperous economy.

⁴ World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future*. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, United Nations.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Creating a sustainable community requires that individuals and organisations have the knowledge, skills, values, capacity and motivation to respond to the complex sustainability issues they encounter in their personal and working lives.

Education for sustainability aims to tackle the underlying causes of unsustainable trends. The focus is on systemic change.

Providing information and raising awareness are important, but so too is building individual and organisational capacity and motivation to innovate and implement solutions. Education for sustainability's focus on building capacity to re-orient the way we live and work makes it an essential element in shifting towards sustainability.

The principles of education for sustainability are outlined in Box 2⁵.



⁵ Tilbury, D. and Cooke, K. (2005) *A National Review of Environmental Education and Its Contribution to Sustainability – Frameworks for Sustainability*. Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage and Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability, Canberra.



PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Education for sustainability is based on the following principles:

Transformation and change

Education for sustainability is not simply about providing information but involves equipping people with the skills, capacity and motivation to plan and manage change towards sustainability within an organisation, industry or community.

Education for all and lifelong learning

Education for sustainability is driven by a broad understanding of education and learning that includes people of all ages and backgrounds and at all stages of life and takes place within all possible learning spaces, formal and informal, in schools, workplaces, homes and communities.

Systems thinking

Education for sustainability aims to equip people to understand connections between environmental, economic, social and political systems.

Envisioning a better future

Education for sustainability engages people in developing a shared vision for a sustainable future.

Critical thinking and reflection

Education for sustainability values the capacity of individuals and groups to reflect on personal experiences and world views and to challenge accepted ways of interpreting and engaging with the world.

Participation

Education for sustainability recognises participation as critical for engaging groups and individuals in sustainability.

Partnerships for change

Education for sustainability focuses on the use of genuine partnerships to build networks and relationships, and improve communication between different sectors of society.

BOX 2

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN AUSTRALIA TODAY

Education for sustainability in Australia has evolved over the past 30 years. Since the first environmental education conference in Australia in 1970⁶ the focus has shifted from knowledge of natural ecosystems and the threats posed to them by overuse and depletion of resources to equipping all people with the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to make decisions based upon their full environmental, social and economic implications.

Education for sustainability still has a long way to go before it could be said to be integral to shaping Australia's environmental, social and economic future but its importance is increasingly being acknowledged. This is reflected through its increasing role in curricula and in extra-curricular activities in all levels of educational institutions. It is also demonstrated through the diversity of providers which now include governments, industry bodies, professional associations, non-government organisations, community groups, zoos, national parks, aquaria and environmental education centres. The combined investment and impact of these bodies is significant in shaping the attitudes, values and behaviour of Australians generally.

Australia has made good progress in bringing together the various providers and approaches to begin to build a more effective overall program of education for sustainability. At the national level key structures such as the National Council on Education for Sustainability, National Education for

Sustainability Network and National Education for Sustainability Research Program (see Box 3) provide a firm foundation for commitment and leadership, commensurate with the increasingly pressing need to address issues such as climate change. They have contributed to establishing:

- a national approach to education for sustainability that aims for lasting, whole-of-organisation and system-wide change
- greater coordination at the state and territory government level, and
- an enhanced profile for education for sustainability within Australia and an international reputation for leading-edge practice.



⁶ Evans, J. and Boyden, S. (1970) *Education and the Environmental Crisis*. Australian Academy of Science, Canberra



A FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH—NATIONAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY STRUCTURES

The national advisory council, network and research program established under the first plan (released in 2000) have played, and will continue to play, an important role in guiding education for sustainability in Australia:

National Environmental Education Council (now the National Council on Education for Sustainability)

The council advises the Australian Government on national needs and priorities in environmental education and education for sustainability.

National Environmental Education Network (now the National Education for Sustainability Network)

The network brings together representatives from environment and education portfolios across the Australian, state and territory governments. It provides a forum for sharing best practice, coordination and developing partnerships. It promotes collaboration on education about priority issues such as climate change and water.

National Education for Sustainability Research Program

This Australian Government-funded research program aims to identify the barriers and drivers for change, assess the effectiveness of existing programs and recommend new approaches to achieve enduring, system-wide change. Sound research is fundamental to developing policy and practice in education for sustainability.

Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative

This is a successful example of how a partnership between the Australian Government, the states and territories can lead to systemic change. The initiative entails a whole-of-school, action learning approach to sustainability which is generating measurable social, educational, financial and environmental outcomes.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S ROLE

The Australian Government's role in education for sustainability is to:

- provide national leadership and coordination
- promote good practice and nationally consistent approaches
- encourage community engagement on a national level
- represent Australia's interests internationally

Domestically the Australian Government pursues this role through national structures, partnerships, funding and research. Internationally it represents Australia's interests by participating with other national governments in international forums and initiatives.

In recognition of the central role of education for sustainability, or education for sustainable development as it is more commonly known

internationally, the United Nations declared the years 2005–2014 the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) and called upon governments around the world to strengthen their commitment to sustainability through education and learning.

The policy framework for Australia's work in education for sustainability is the Australian Government's response to the UNDESD, *Caring for Our Future* (Box 4)⁷. Operating within this framework, this plan identifies the strategies and actions for which the Australian Government will take responsibility. Through implementing the plan, the Australian Government seeks to provide national leadership and to encourage action by the many individuals and organisations with responsibility for, and interest in, education for sustainability as an instrument of change.



⁷ Commonwealth of Australia (2007) *Caring for Our Future: The Australian Government Strategy for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014*. Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage, Canberra, pp.5-9.

CARING FOR OUR FUTURE

The policy framework for this national action plan is *Caring for Our Future*, the Australian Government's response to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD). *Caring for Our Future* identified a number of themes that underpin the national action plan.

Communicating the concepts

Understanding the concepts and principles of sustainability is a critical step in gaining acceptance of the value of sustainability as a national aspiration. It is also a critical element of the change process, enabling people to envisage more sustainable lifestyles and the changes necessary to realise them.

Basing our approach on sound research

Research provides the evidence base for educational responses to sustainability issues. Research is required to guide policy development, set priorities for action, identify best practice, assess barriers to change, evaluate the impact of policies and programs, and guide individual, organisational and community action.

Ensuring momentum

Australia has a strong history in education for sustainability. Building upon our achievements to date and the structures and resources already available is critical to maximising the impact of future actions and to motivating new and innovative approaches.

Promoting a whole-of-government approach

Sustainability provides challenges for governments pursuing competing policy goals and balancing the interests of present and future generations. Engagement within and between government agencies helps to embed a culture of sustainability and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of policy and program delivery, reduce duplication of expenditure and improve sustainability outcomes. State, territory and local governments play a major role in delivering education for sustainability.

Building partnerships

Partnerships are a key feature of successful sustainability initiatives. Partnerships provide opportunities for learning and should be fostered within and between government, non-government, business, industry and other organisations. Effective partnerships value diversity and the new perspectives and opportunities they provide.

Monitoring and evaluation

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation informs and shapes the implementation of education for sustainability and is essential to ensuring that the approaches adopted achieve their aims.

BOX 4

INTEGRATING EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY WITH OTHER MEASURES

Education is not the only tool for promoting sustainable practices. Other measures include legislation, economic/market-based instruments and technology. With its focus on knowledge, skills, values and behaviour, education is a critical tool in achieving enduring change. Education contributes to the success of other measures because it helps people to understand the complexity

of the challenges and builds their capacity to respond.

The prospects of success in implementing change are enhanced when measures are integrated. This plan seeks to ensure that education for sustainability is integrated with other policy tools utilised to deliver Australian Government policy and program outcomes.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

While Australia's actions to date provide a sound foundation for further progress in education for sustainability, a strengthened effort is required in light of the scale and immediacy of the issues at hand.

In 2007–08, an extensive consultation process was commissioned by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to identify the needs and priorities in education for sustainability for the next five years.

It was widely recognised that the change needed to move Australia to a sustainable way of life requires a more coordinated and focused effort. There is a need to 'join the dots' and align the efforts of all stakeholders within a strong strategic framework.

Most significantly, consultation showed an overwhelming call for strengthened national leadership in education for sustainability in Australia.

The results of the community consultation are summarised in Box 5.





IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

The priority areas for national action in education for sustainability were identified through an extensive community consultation process commissioned by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in 2007–08. Comments were sought through an online survey, expert interviews, six community workshops held across Australia and an Australian Government cross-portfolio workshop. Respondents included state and local governments; educational institutions; community groups; business and industry associations; professional associations; and zoos, national parks and aquaria.

Many of the issues canvassed correspond with actions taken to date and highlight the need for ongoing support for education. There was broad agreement on the need for improved outcomes in the following areas:

- leadership and coordination from all levels of government
- partnerships and networks, within and between sectors
- integration with other government measures
- access to increased and more targeted funding, including greater continuity and longer timeframes for supported projects
- training and professional development in education for sustainability in a variety of contexts including industry, formal education and the community, with particular emphasis on national training packages and undergraduate teacher training
- awareness and information about learning and behaviour change models, and effective learning for sustainability
- coordinated availability of teaching and learning materials and resources, including best practice case studies
- publicity and advocacy to demonstrate the benefits of education for sustainability and raise the profile of the national action plan
- attitudes, motivation and commitment to act, through engaging the community, discussing desired outcomes and developing shared values and goals
- engaging the media, and
- an effective research program.

PART 2

THE PLAN: A VISION AND MISSION FOR CHANGE

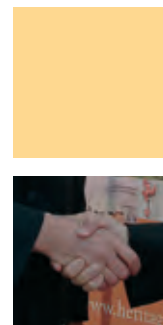
This National Action Plan for Education for Sustainability—*Living Sustainably*—reflects the Australian Government’s national leadership role, the views expressed during community consultation and the advice provided by the former National Environmental Education Council.

The plan seeks to ensure that educational activities to promote sustainability use a coordinated, holistic approach to address sustainability’s social, economic and environmental dimensions.

Working with the newly constituted National Council on Education for Sustainability, the Australian Government will focus initially on actions it identifies as highest priority. It will work towards a whole-of-government approach and establish partnerships and strategic links within and between the government, industry and community sectors to ensure progress on a national scale.

The plan acknowledges that if sustainability is to be achieved actions cannot be limited to formal education and the particular needs of different sectors must be identified and addressed.

Implementation of the plan will see education for sustainability in Australia better integrated with other measures to promote a sustainable community. This integrated approach will assist in bringing about the systemic transformation needed to make Australia sustainable.



VISION

The plan's vision is that:

All Australians have the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably.

MISSION

The plan's mission is:

To engage the community in sustainability through education and lifelong learning.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The plan is based on four strategies that address the issues identified through community consultation:

1. Demonstrating Australian Government leadership
2. Reorienting education systems to sustainability
3. Fostering sustainability in business and industry
4. Harnessing community spirit to act

Each strategy is supported by actions to be carried out over the life of the plan.



STRATEGY 1: DEMONSTRATING AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

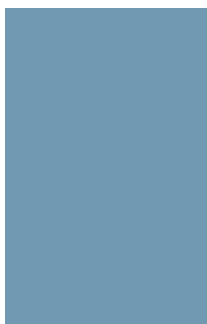
There is increasing evidence of the need for immediate action on issues which affect sustainability in Australia and across the globe. The challenges of climate change and water security in particular reinforce the need for strong leadership by current decision-makers to effect change.

The Australian Government will strengthen its leadership role in education for sustainability by being an exemplar for change through its own policies, programs and operations and by applying learning-based change in the culture of the Australian Public Service. It will also work to promote system-wide change through greater coordination and collaboration with state, territory and local governments.

Internationally the government will continue to work constructively with other countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, by sharing its knowledge and resources.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The Australian Government provides national leadership on education for sustainability.**
- 1.2 Sustainability outcomes are taken into consideration in developing and implementing Australian Government policies, programs and operations.**
- 1.3 Australia is acknowledged as a constructive contributor to the education for sustainability activities of other countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.**





ACTIONS

1.1 Australian Government leadership

1.1.1 Promoting education for sustainability in national forums

The Australian Government will promote the relevance and practical implementation of education for sustainability in appropriate national forums such as the Council of Australian Governments, ministerial councils and specifically convened meetings.

1.1.2 Coordinating effort

The Australian Government will work with state, territory and local governments and other relevant bodies to coordinate education for sustainability and to maximise the use of available resources and the outcomes achieved. It will also work in partnership with business and industry, education systems and community sectors to achieve system-wide change.

1.1.3 Integrating education for sustainability into national initiatives

The Australian Government will make provision in relevant national sustainability initiatives for funding complementary education for sustainability activities.

1.1.4 National Council on Education for Sustainability (formerly the National Environmental Education Council)

The newly constituted National Council on Education for Sustainability will advise the government on the national needs and priorities in education for sustainability.

1.1.5 National Education for Sustainability Network (formerly National Environmental Education Network)

The network of education and environment agencies established by the first national action plan to coordinate the activities of Australian, state and territory governments will be continued but renamed to take account of the broader emphasis on sustainability.

1.1.6 National Education for Sustainability Research Program

To ensure that strategies and actions are soundly based, the Australian Government will continue the national research program established under the first national action plan.

1.1.7 Monitoring and evaluation

The Australian Government will implement a system for monitoring and evaluating the success of education for sustainability activities at the national level, including developing appropriate indicators.

1.2 Integration with Australian Government policies, programs and operations

1.2.1 Australian Public Service sustainability training

Consistent with the government's commitment to sustainability in government, inclusion of the principles of education for sustainability in training programs for the Australian Public Service, with a particular focus on senior management, will be explored. This exploration may involve collaboration with non-government providers such as the Institute of Public Administration Australia and the Australian and New Zealand School of Government as well as public sector professional associations.

1.2.2 Australian Public Service 'Learning for Sustainability' networks and partnerships

The government will set up a network of sustainability champions in departments and agencies to foster awareness of sustainability considerations in government policy, programs and operations.

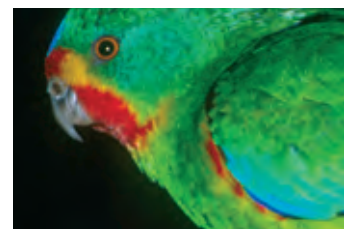
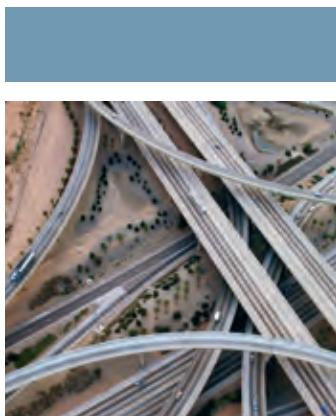
1.2.3 Sustainability resources

The level of practical support available to the Australian Public Service to apply sustainability principles in policies, programs and operations will be considered. Learning-based tools will be developed to help effect organisational change in policy development and program implementation, and in operational areas such as procurement, and facilities and fleet management.

1.3 International cooperation

1.3.1 Australia's expertise will continue to be promoted through participation in international forums and processes including continued support for the aims and objectives of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

1.3.2 Collaborative projects with other countries will be developed as opportunities arise, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Projects may include sharing information and resources, exchange programs at school and tertiary level, and developing a network of officials involved in education for sustainability.





STRATEGY 2: REORIENTING EDUCATION SYSTEMS TO SUSTAINABILITY

Our educational institutions provide the foundation for Australia's prosperity by building a society with the knowledge, skills and capacity to meet national aspirations. The Australian Government is committed to using education as a critical resource to prepare Australia for the emerging social, economic and environmental challenges of the 21st century. A transformative approach to education is needed, involving whole-of-institution engagement, innovative teaching and learning, and changes to curricula.

This plan covers all sectors of Australia's formal education system: schools (early childhood, primary and secondary); vocational education and training; and universities.

Managing the campus in line with what is learnt in the classroom reinforces formal learning and demonstrates the importance of the issues. Engaging students and staff in planning and actions for sustainability creates a sense of personal responsibility that will carry into their interactions in the workplace and broader community.

The Australian Government will seek to expand its work in schools and tertiary education institutions. The focus will be on achieving a culture of sustainability in which education for sustainability is reinforced by continuous improvement in the sustainability of campus management. This work will include professional development for teachers, greater access to quality teaching and learning resources, developing policy frameworks and practical support for changes to campus management. The following actions aim to help educational institutions integrate sustainability into curricula and management.

OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The vocational education and training sector incorporates sustainability in all national training packages; and implements sustainable campus management.**
- 2.2 Education for sustainability is integrated into all university courses/subject areas and campuses are managed in a sustainable way.**
- 2.3 Whole-of-school and whole-of-system approaches to education for sustainability, including campus management, are adopted through widespread uptake of the National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools and implementation of the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative.**

ACTIONS

2.1 Vocational education and training

2.1.1 Sustainability framework

A sustainability policy framework for the vocational education and training sector will be developed in conjunction with appropriate partners. The framework will set out strategies for integrating sustainability into national vocational education and training qualifications, their delivery and campus management.

2.1.2 Embedding competency standards for sustainability

The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in consultation with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations will work with the Industry Skills Councils and state training authorities to promote sustainability through the national training system. Interdisciplinary approaches will be considered and specific high impact National Industry Training Packages will be targeted initially to serve as an example for sustainability in vocational education and training.

2.1.3 Professional development in sustainability

A professional development strategy will be developed to build the capability of vocational education and training organisations and trainers to deliver sustainability training, consistent with the framework developed in 2.1.1. The strategy will be developed in partnership with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and state training authorities and may provide for developing material for learning and assessment, case studies and professional learning and training programs.

2.1.4 Aligning funding criteria to sustainability

The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in consultation with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations will examine the feasibility of incentives in funding criteria for including sustainability in training delivery. The departments will also look at incentives for all educational institutions to implement a whole-of-organisation approach to sustainability, encompassing campus management and curricula, to build the institutions' capacity to influence industry and communities through education.

2.1.5 Sustainability network

Practical mechanisms to support sustainability in vocational education and training will be considered and may include, for example, developing a network of industry, government and training stakeholders. Networking would help in coordinating the delivery of education for sustainability, and in developing and distributing case studies of successful practice.

2.1.6 Sustainability audit

Industry needs for sustainability skills will be researched and an audit conducted of the current state of sustainability training in vocational education and training and its effectiveness. The project will map the availability of resources to support the delivery of existing training and identify gaps. Options to ensure that sustainability is effectively incorporated in all vocational education and training will be examined.

2.2 Universities

2.2.1 Whole-of-institution sustainability program

A program will be developed to support and encourage whole-of-institution change for sustainability (including research, teaching and learning, and campus management) in universities. This may include practical support in line with the whole-of-school, whole-of-system philosophy adopted by the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative.

2.2.2 Sustainability incentives scheme

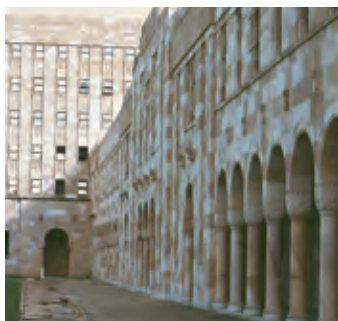
The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in consultation with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations will examine whether it is feasible and appropriate to provide incentives (funding, grants, awards schemes and practical support) for universities to implement the Education for Sustainable Development Policy of Universities Australia.

2.2.3 Sustainability networks

Sustainability networks will be supported to improve coordination, share best practice and communicate the concepts of sustainability in universities. Actions will aim to raise the profile and reach of these networks through tools such as websites, forums and conferences.

2.2.4 Sustainability for key professions

The Australian Government will work with appropriate partners to promote integration of sustainability into professional learning qualifications and university degree accreditation. This project will research incorporating sustainability into university courses for key professions such as engineering, accountancy, economics, law, architecture, planning and teaching. Priority will be given to those professions with the greatest and most immediate impact on sustainability outcomes. This work will build on the existing work of the Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability with business schools and teacher education institutions.



2.3 Schools

2.3.1 Growing the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative—whole-of-school approaches to education for sustainability

The Australian Government will continue to work in partnership with the states and territories to consolidate and expand the whole-of-school, system-wide approach to education for sustainability begun by the highly successful Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI).

2.3.2 Improving systems support for sustainability in schools

Consistent with the systemic approach to sustainability in schools adopted by AuSSI, the Australian Government will work with state and territory governments to ensure sustainability is appropriately embedded in policies, programs, procedures and systems.

2.3.3 Coordination of school-based programs

In order to achieve maximum impact the Australian Government will seek to identify and coordinate sustainability initiatives directed at schools. For example links will be explored between AuSSI and the Ministerial Council on Energy's work on energy efficiency in the school curriculum and associated professional development, as well as with the National Solar Schools Program. Links with Australian Government health and social well-being programs for schools will also be considered.

2.3.4 Professional development for teachers

The Australian Government will work with state and territory governments to provide in-service professional development for teachers in education for sustainability, including developing teaching resources.

2.3.5 Embedding sustainability in curricula

The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in consultation with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations will work with state and territory governments to ensure sustainability is formally addressed in curricula. The Australian Government is committed to the development of a rigorous and world class national curriculum that will be futures oriented and will assist students to address major national and global challenges, including emerging environmental challenges. The national curriculum will also include a number of cross curriculum perspectives such as cultural sensitivity, engaged citizenship and a commitment to sustainable patterns of living.

2.3.6 Early childhood education

Consistent with the principle of lifelong education for sustainability, a research project will look at the role of education for sustainability in early childhood education and appropriate models for its integration into this sector.



STRATEGY 3: FOSTERING SUSTAINABILITY IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Alongside government, business and industry have a critical role to play in the shift towards sustainability. They are a significant focus of national education and capacity building efforts.

The approach taken in this plan includes capacity building through vocational education institutions and universities in addition to immediate and practical initiatives for current business operations. Projects will seek to build business and industry capacity to plan for sustainability, adopt appropriate frameworks and tools, and harness incentives for change such as improved efficiencies, cost savings, corporate reputation, and staff morale and retention.

The actions identified here are complemented by the actions in Strategy 2 applying to tertiary education, which directly affects the knowledge, skills and values of the business and industry sectors.

OBJECTIVE

- 3. Australian business and industry are acknowledged leaders in moving towards sustainability through innovation and improvement to management and operations.**

ACTIONS

Business and industry

3.1 Sustainability skills forum

An event to identify the skills needed by business and industry to adopt sustainable practices will be held. The outcomes of the forum will help drive sustainability skills development through tertiary education and through developing practical resources and materials for current industry leaders.

3.2 Peak partnerships for sustainability

The Australian Government will work with peak industry bodies, professional associations and non-government organisations, using existing networks where possible, to develop and deliver workplace learning, professional development, mentoring for sustainability, and sharing best practice.

3.3 Integrating education for sustainability in business schools

Given the impact business schools have on current and emerging business and industry leaders, integrating education for sustainability principles into the curricula of business schools, including Master of Business Administration programs and short courses, will be encouraged.

3.4 Industry and business school partnerships for sustainability

To promote the above integration and establish a demand, partnerships between business schools and business and industry will be fostered.

3.5 Sustainability champions

In conjunction with peak bodies and professional associations, a program of short courses and events for senior executives with high profile speakers will be developed to engage business in sustainability issues and encourage greater commitment and momentum.

STRATEGY 4: HARNESSING COMMUNITY SPIRIT TO ACT

The Australian Government recognises the current heightened community awareness of issues such as climate change and water shortages and Australians' willingness to help meet the significant sustainability challenges we face. To tap into this spirit to act, the community must be empowered with knowledge, skills and opportunity.

The national action plan focuses on areas where it is possible to achieve the greatest impacts. It therefore seeks to engage the many diverse providers of education for sustainability including state, territory and local governments, national parks, heritage sites, zoos, museums, and aquaria. The plan also seeks to make existing programs more effective by developing best practice guides, standards, and case studies and through continued monitoring, evaluation and research.

OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Communities around Australia are empowered to work effectively towards sustainability by having the information and resources to enable them to act.**
- 4.2 Community education for sustainability practitioners are supported in their work by having access to the appropriate knowledge and tools to enable them to operate effectively.**
- 4.3 The role that education plays in promoting sustainability is widely acknowledged.**
- 4.4 There is a better understanding of the drivers and issues that need to be considered in implementing effective community education for sustainability.**

ACTIONS

4.1 Tools and resources

4.1.1 Sustainability solutions—Community Education Grants Scheme

A Community Education Grants Scheme will support best practice projects which deliver education, training and capacity building for sustainability. The focus will be on projects which have national application and/or the potential to bring about systemic change.

4.1.2 Standards for best practice community education for sustainability

Best practice standards for community education will be developed and promoted. The standards will assist education for sustainability providers to improve their overall impact.

4.2 Capacity building for practitioners

4.2.1 Capacity building for local government

In partnership with relevant bodies, initiatives will be developed to enable local government to provide best practice community education for sustainability. The focus will be on increasing opportunities for training and mentoring, providing access to case studies and resources, and coordination and networking.

4.2.2 Transforming experiences—enhancing community education programs

Initiatives will be developed to build the capacity of protected areas and heritage sites, zoos, museums, and aquaria to engage the public in activities aligned with the principles of education for sustainability. Working with peak bodies, the most appropriate ways to align existing education activities with best practice community education for sustainability will be examined, including through networking, coordination and information sharing.

4.3 Raising the profile

4.3.1 Sustainability stories—working with the media

The Australian Government will seek to work with media organisations to communicate sustainability concepts to the Australian community. Initiatives to be examined include developing training for journalists on key sustainability issues such as climate, water and biodiversity, and on how to transform community concern into action through inspirational storytelling.

4.3.2 Sustainability ambassador program

High profile sustainability ambassadors from the entertainment, sporting, scientific and business communities will be engaged to raise community awareness about the importance of living and working sustainably.

4.4 Understanding the issues through research

4.4.1 Understanding community attitudes, values and behaviour

A national survey of community attitudes to the environment and sustainability will be developed in order to benchmark and track changes in knowledge and understanding and to inform the development and implementation of education and communications activity. The survey will draw upon the experiences of the NSW *Who Cares About the Environment* research and be implemented in partnership with agencies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

4.4.2 Valuing Indigenous knowledge

A project in conjunction with Indigenous advisers will identify how to better acknowledge and integrate Indigenous value systems, practical skills and knowledge of the Australian landscape in community education for sustainability.

4.4.3 Education for sustainability cost-benefit analysis

In order to better understand the value and impact of education in relation to other mechanisms to effect change for sustainability, a cost-benefit analysis on education for sustainability will be undertaken. Findings will help show how education can most effectively be used to achieve national sustainability objectives.



IMAGE CREDITS

PAGE	TITLE	REFERENCE
Cover	CH 2 city view	City of Melbourne
Cover	Umuwa Solar Power Station in outback South Australia	Solar Systems Pty Ltd
Cover	Wildflowers at Mount Hotham, VIC	Trevor Ierino & DEWHA
Cover	Flat Back Turtle nesting survey at Field Island, Kakadu, NT	Scott Laidlaw & DEWHA
Cover	DEWHA departmental "Ride to Work" day, ACT	Mark Mohell & DEWHA
Cover	Irrigation channel running through farmland	DEWHA
Cover	Using diamond drilling equipment to obtain core samples during exploration	Minerals Council of Australia & DEWHA
Cover	Office recycling area	Sustainability Victoria
Cover	Meeting of Urban Biodiversity Team in the Conference Room	John Baker & DEWHA
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Cover	Blayney Wind Farm	Arthur Mostead & DEWHA
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1	Kakadu National Park	Ian Oswalk-Jacobs
1	Desmond Williams showing Indigenous rock art near Truscott Airfield	Dragi Markovic & DEWHA
1	Blayney Wind Farm	Arthur Mostead & DEWHA
1	Hands planting tree	Andrew Tatnell & DEWHA
1	Victor Harbor Primary School students on the beach at Crockery Bay	John Baker & DEWHA
1	Eroded soil under White Oak (<i>Lagunaria patersonia</i>)	Paul Stevenson & DEWHA
2	Beach clean up activities at Cullen Point, Mapoon, QLD	Dragi Markovic & DEWHA
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2	Subtropical rainforest, Lamington National Park, QLD	Paul Candlin & DEWHA
3	CH 2 roof	City of Melbourne
3	Reflections on the lake near Manjimup, WA	DEWHA
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3	Dawn spiderweb at Lake Moogerah	Sarah Wheaton & DEWHA
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5	Bondi Beach in Sydney on sunny day	Tourism NSW
5	Enjoying the view of the Atherton Tablelands, QLD	Wet Tropics Management Authority - Qld
6	Beach clean up activities at Cullen Point, Mapoon, QLD	Dragi Markovic & DEWHA
6	Seven Mile Beach in Tasmania	Merran Williams & DEWHA
8	Landcare volunteer workers removing weeds at Galgabba Point, Swansea, NSW	John Baker & DEWHA
8	Young schoolboy conducting Waterwatch activities in Mildura	Cecilia Burke & DEWHA
8	Shark Bay Visitor Centre, Denham, WA	Dragi Markovic & DEWHA
8	Tallebudgera Beach School Dune Care Demons clean up the Tallebudgera area	Rix Ryan Photography & DEWHA
10	Sydney Harbour Bridge 75th birthday festivities	Michael Lindquist & DEWHA
10	Hands and yellow fruits	Steve Strike & DEWHA
11	Students Walking	Macquarie University
12	River Red Gum with Flinders Ranges in the background	John Baker & DEWHA
12	Yellow Water Lagoon in Kakadu National Park	John Baker & DEWHA
12	The Salt Lake at Curtain Springs, Kingoonya, SA	Allan Fox & DEWHA
12	<i>Hibbertia cuneiformis</i>	© M. Fagg, Australian National Botanic Gardens

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14	Leaves	Photodisc
14	Echuca Landcare Group doing tree planting and weed removal work alongside the Campaspe River	John Baker & DEWHA
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16	Train	Jenny Tomkins & DEWHA
16	Children planting seedlings	DEWHA
16	Minister Garrett announcing funding boost to help protect HMVS Cerberus shipwreck	Jeff Bird & DEWHA
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17	Steam rises from cleaner production unit	DEWHA
17	Wetlands meeting in the Banksia Room of the John Gorton Building	Arthur Mostead & DEWHA
17	River Red Gum with Flinders Ranges in the background	John Baker & DEWHA
17	CH 2 Building	City of Melbourne
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18	Modern office	Sustainability Victoria
18	WELS Scheme Stakeholder Forum at the Rydges Lakeside Hotel	Dragi Markovic & DEWHA
18	Grey water system tank at the John Gorton Building	Arthur Mostead & DEWHA
19	Halls creek in the Purnululu National Park, WA	Rod Hartvigsen & DEWHA
20	Road network	Photodisc
20	Old heritage house in Bombala	Trevor Preston & DEWHA
20	Swift Parrot	T. Tonelli
21	Students with Autumn Colour	Macquarie University
23	Forgan Smith Building at the University of Queensland	A. Robertson & DEWHA
23	Jacqui Polday working on a Community Water Grants project at the Australian National University	Mark Mohell & DEWHA
23	Crew on bridge of Marion Dufresne - AUSCAN voyage	Katrina Haig & DEWHA
24	Students trying their hands at the "Pollen in the Tyre Tracks" project in the Border Rivers NRM region	Lyle Radford & DEWHA
24	Grades 3 and 4 from Wilmot Road Primary School in Shepparton at Gemmils Swamp, Mooroopna	Fine Focus Video & DEWHA
24	Group of students from St Josephs Primary School in Busselton	Michael Marriott & DEWHA
27	Children at Rivett Primary School planting native trees	Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Overseas Information Branch
27	Clean up Australia Day in Melbourne	Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Overseas Information Branch
27	Subtropical rainforest, Lamington National Park, QLD	Paul Candlin & DEWHA
27	Tallebudgera Beach School Dune Care Demons cleaning up the Tallebudgera Beach area	Rix Ryan Photography & the DEWHA
27	Kakadu National Park	Ian Oswalk-Jacobs

