

Department of Education, Training and the Arts response to
the recommendations of the Ministerial Advisory Committee
for Educational Renewal



Education for Sustainable Futures: Schooling for the Smart State

November 2006

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Recommendations	Response	Actions and time lines
<p>Recommendation 1 That all students within the State of Queensland be educated to be active and informed citizens, aware of the rights and obligations of citizenship, as well as being capable of creating and participating in a future sustainable society.</p>	Accepted	<p>The Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) subscribes to the National Goals of Australian Schooling in the 21st Century. In particular, that students have an understanding of, and concern for, stewardship of the natural environment and the knowledge and skills to contribute to ecologically sustainable development.</p> <p>DETA will take action to involve young people in environmental sustainability issues and empower students to be active and informed citizens capable of creating and participating in a future sustainable society.</p> <p>The Queensland Government will establish a Queensland Youth Environment Council to enable young Queenslanders to raise environmental concerns and provide suggestions to the Minister for Education, Training and the Arts and the Minister for the Environment.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 That DETA work with three schooling sectors to develop a 'Statement on Sustainability for Queensland Schools' based on the principles for sustainability outlined in the draft Statement provided by MACER.</p>	Accepted	<p>DETA will initiate discussions with the three schooling sectors in Queensland to develop a joint 'Statement on Sustainability' although the department respects the independence of the non-state schooling sector.</p> <p>The 'Statement on Sustainability' will build on the example provided by MACER and the aims and ideals of the Earth Charter which outlines principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21st century. This will be a one-page statement which outlines the vision, values and decision-making principles for sustainability in Queensland schools.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 That DETA and school sectors be encouraged to develop a Sustainability Strategy including actions that will guide schools to incorporate a sustainable futures perspective in all facets of their respective strategic planning processes.</p>	Accepted	<p>DETA will develop a sustainability strategy with two key components. For state schools, a sustainable education curriculum strategy will focus on what and how to teach for sustainability, and on the professional development to support this. For the department more broadly, a sustainability strategy will examine management structures to ensure environmentally sustainable asset and resource management.</p> <p>The department respects the non-state schools' independence in relation to their respective schools. Independent Schools of Queensland (ISQ) and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission will be encouraged to consider MACER's recommendations.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 That DETA and Queensland schools model the 'principles for sustainability' in corporate decision making, curriculum planning and delivery, and the management of the environment and facilities in which all staff and students work and learn.</p>	Accepted	<p>All decision-making bodies within the department will be required to model and operate according to the principles for sustainability to be endorsed in the 'Statement on Sustainability'. All schooling sectors will be encouraged to embed the principles in their policies and practices.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 That the Queensland Environmentally Sustainable Schools Initiative (QESSI), through its regional hubs and member schools and the network of Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres, provide continued professional development and learning in 'education for sustainability' (as set out in the 'professional development and training' sections of this Report) to the staff and students of Queensland schools.</p>	Accepted	<p>The existing QESSI Alliance and the Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres (O&EECs) will continue to deliver professional development workshops on education for sustainability and to support schools in the integration of education for sustainability into their existing curriculum frameworks in line with Recommendation 3 above.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 That all future improvements of the syllabuses for the key learning areas (KLAs), in particular SOSE, science, arts, health and physical education, should ensure each syllabus, and the essential learnings, reflect the principles of education for sustainability, as contained in the draft Statement of Sustainability for Queensland Schools provided by MACER.</p>	Accepted in principle	<p>The Essential Learnings within the Queensland Curriculum and Reporting Framework are to reflect the principles for sustainability provided by MACER and the aims and ideals of the Earth Charter. As the Statutory Authority responsible for syllabus and the development of the Essential Learnings, this recommendation will be referred to the Queensland Studies Authority. For state schools, Education Queensland will continue to provide curriculum support to schools (particularly in relation to SOSE, science and technology) and input into the Essential Learnings.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 7 That school staff, including administrative assistants, grounds persons and tuckshop workers, as well as interested members of the local community, be made aware of the 'Statement on Sustainability', including the sustainability principles appropriate to their areas of work.</p>	Accepted	In state schools, principals will be responsible for informing all staff and volunteers about the 'Statement on Sustainability'. Once developed, the Statement will also be communicated through a range of mechanisms. Non-state schools will be encouraged to communicate the Statement using their existing communication methods.
<p>Recommendation 8 That there be additional professional support from appropriately qualified personnel (beyond the teaching profession) for staff involved in education for sustainability, both in schools and in outdoor and environmental education centres.</p>	Accepted	Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres, QESSI Hubs and other service providers will continue to provide training opportunities for staff to enable them to refine their practices to be more environmentally sustainable. DETA will provide opportunities for senior management, both in central, regional and outdoor and environmental education centres, to participate in sustainable development conferences and workshops.
<p>Recommendation 9 That school sectors provide professional development for educators and principals on evidence-based pedagogical principles and curriculum planning involved in education for sustainability.</p>	Accepted	DETA recognises the value of learner-centred, action-based curriculum and pedagogy. Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres and QESSI Hubs, in partnership with other service providers, will continue to provide leadership in the delivery of professional development to principals, teachers and school staff on curriculum planning to support education for sustainability.
<p>Recommendation 10 That, as part of their regular whole school planning and review processes, schools develop school-based Environmental Management Plans, with particular emphasis on resource management, school grounds improvement and curriculum integration of sustainability principles.</p>	Accepted	<p>O&EECs and QESSI Hubs will support schools to embed sustainability principles and considerations through their regular school planning and reporting cycles. O&EECs and QESSI support will include an emphasis on resource management, school grounds improvements and curriculum integration based on the principles of sustainability.</p> <p>As part of their regular planning and reporting processes, schools will analyse asset and resource management to reduce the use of resources (i.e. water, energy and waste) and improve biodiversity through school grounds improvement. As part of the planning process for the Tomorrow's Schools program which has committed \$900 m over five years from 2006–07, consideration will be given to including sustainability principles in the selection criteria. For example, the initial School Community Development Fund of \$50 m for 2006–07 (which forms part of the overall \$900 m program) will include a focus on schools developing environmentally sustainable approaches to water management.</p> <p>DETA will also provide materials to assist school communities with landscape management including guidance on how to plan, design, maintain and initiate sustainable landscape projects for their school grounds.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11 That schools be encouraged to develop partnerships with industries, businesses and local communities to assist the process of embedding the principles of sustainability in their operations.</p>	Accepted	<p>Through the QESSI Steering Committee, DETA will develop whole-of-state productive partnerships and strategic alliances with other key stakeholders (including government agencies, non-government organisations and corporate bodies) that support schools to become more environmentally sustainable.</p> <p>O&EECs and QESSI Hubs will continue to build regional productive partnerships and strategic alliances with other key stakeholders (including government agencies, non-government organisations and corporate bodies) that support schools to become more environmentally sustainable, through the development of Regional Action Plans for Sustainability (RAPS) for the implementation of sustainability initiatives within each region.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12 That the tertiary education sector be encouraged to adopt a parallel approach of embedding the principles of sustainability into both curriculum and operation of its institutions.</p>	Accepted in principle	As the statutory body responsible for the professional standards of teachers trained by the tertiary education sector, this recommendation will be referred to the Queensland College of Teachers for consideration by its professional standards committee, which is developing new standards for teacher education course approval.
<p>Recommendation 13 That a review of the implementation of sustainability strategies be undertaken in 2008 as a local contribution to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.</p>	Accepted	A substantial review of the implementation of both the departmental 'Statement on Sustainability' and Strategy will occur in 2008.