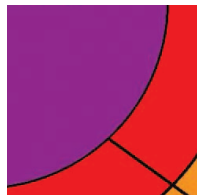
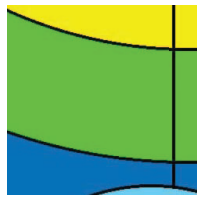


Introduction

Part A: Our Strategic Plan



Introducing Our Strategic Plan

Aim and Purpose

THE AIM OF THIS PLAN is to establish an effective strategic framework for coordinated action in delivering and supporting:

- environmental education for sustainability in all schools in Queensland, and
- encouraging all schools in Queensland to become environmentally sustainable.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN is to help establish and support an Alliance of key stakeholders involved in environmental education for sustainability in Queensland Schools.

This Alliance includes government agencies and corporations, key interest groups, non-government organisations, and other service providers, all working towards the common aim of sustainable schools teaching and learning about sustainability. The plan will assist in coordinating the effort and resources of Alliance members towards achieving best practice sustainability education and sustainable schools in Queensland.

Layout and Structure

The QESSI Alliance Strategic Plan comprises 5 parts:

Part B: The QESSI Alliance - Working Together

Working together in an Alliance sharing challenges, creating positive relationships and results, and getting the best from our resources.

Part C: The QESSI Alliance Strategic Plan - Creating Sustainable Schools

Supporting schools to be environmentally sustainable, and places of total learning linked to local and regional communities.

Part D: Regional Implementation - Supporting Local Action

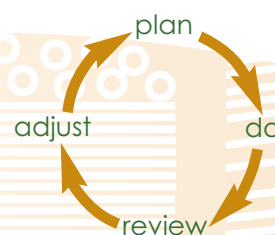
Encouraging and supporting actions and programs being designed and established to suit and meet regional and local priorities.

Part E: Reviewing Our Progress

Checking on our efforts and adjusting to changing circumstances so that we continuously improve over time.

Part F: Background Information

Useful material, and results of past activities supporting our work now and for the future.



Introducing Our Strategic Plan

How to use the Plan

Part B: The QESSI Alliance - Working Together

Part B helps combine our planning and actions, such as program development and delivery, resourcing and evaluation processes. The focus is on our process of working together and supporting initiatives that help achieve our common vision. Key steps are identified to initiate, develop and strengthen our Alliance, including opportunities for cooperation and recognising existing programs and actions.

A *communication and participation strategy* encourages good connections and involvement from members of our Alliance. It sets out agreed protocols and ways we can liaise and work together.

A *work plan* sets out a range of tasks related to the key steps, to achieve these results. An *implementation schedule* is provided with specific actions. This schedule is prepared on an annual basis, identifying agreed mutual priorities, with funding and other key information to assist in the coordinated efforts of our Alliance. The schedule will be informed by, and be prepared to, help achieve regional action plans.

Part C: QESSI Alliance Action Plan - Creating Sustainable Schools

Part C is used to coordinate our planning and actions in supporting schools to be more environmentally sustainable, and to implement environmental education for sustainability curricula. The focus is on supporting schools in their effort to be models of sustainability and places of total learning, sharing this awareness with their local communities.

The plan identifies key goals and a range of strategies and actions to achieve this vision, encouraging cooperative action wherever possible.



Introducing Our Strategic Plan

Part D: Regional Implementation - Supporting Local Action

Part D describes the approach to delivering the statewide strategic plan at the regional to local level, through schools and their support networks. The plan acknowledges that each region and its local communities have common and unique challenges and opportunities to consider.

Part E: Reviewing Our Progress

Part E is used to plan and carry out the review of our work together. The focus is on effective and timely evaluation of our planning and actions, acknowledging our success and areas for improvement, seeking to benefit from experience and improve over time.

A *timeline* identifies the cycle and process of review, including the updating of this plan. A *report card* prepared annually, provides a regular progress report, including recommended actions and ways to maintain and improve our process and results. The report card will capture a range of sustainability outcomes in environmental, social, cultural and educational dimensions.

Part F: Background Information

Part F is used to store completed action and work plans and schedules, as well as past report cards. This provides an opportunity to see what we have done and what work continues on. This section also provides reference material and other useful information relevant to this plan. A glossary of terms including names of government agencies, organisations, and key documents is located in Part F of this Plan.



The Sustainability Model and Principles

The Key Principles

Key principles of sustainability planning and action underscore and will be applied to environmental education for sustainability programs to support the development of environmentally sustainable schools.

These are:

- protecting biological diversity and ecological processes
- taking a precautionary and anticipatory approach to decisions and actions
- striving for social equity and maintaining equity between and within generations
- encouraging and providing for community and stakeholder participation
- respecting and appreciating cultural diversity
- understanding the real costs of development and encouraging careful use of resources

The Sustainability Model

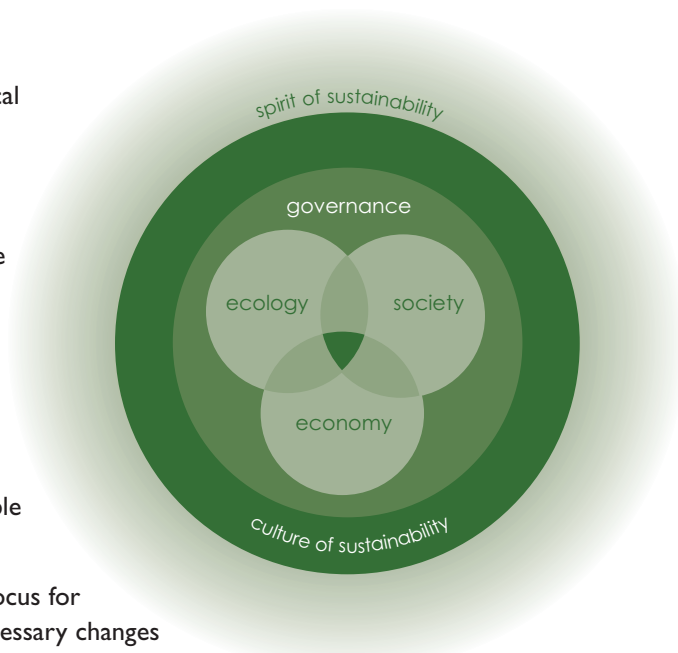
Our sustainability model acknowledges Nature as the basis for our existence and prosperity. Our socio-cultural and economic systems integrate with, and benefit from, ecological systems without adverse impact. Our governance (management & decision making) systems will seek to reinforce and foster this approach. When fully embraced and consistently practiced, a culture of sustainability naturally develops in the education process in schools and has a flow on effect in the community. This establishes, over time, an inherent way of life embodying a spirit of sustainability, passed down through generations.

Building an awareness of the inter-relatedness of these elements of sustainability helps to develop an understanding of the relationship between the local and global environment. It helps establish and retain a deep personal connection to places, people and intrinsic values.

The key elements

- **ecology:** biodiversity, ecological processes, energy, water and landscape systems
- **society:** health and wellbeing, cultural diversity, equity, sense of community and place
- **economy:** meaningful work, prosperity, efficient services and products
- **governance:** stewardship, ethics, participation, accountable management

▼ **self, school, community:** the focus for understanding and making necessary changes



Adapted from P. Cuming, Sustainable Futures Australia © 2002

Environmental Education for Sustainability

The National Action Plan: Environmental Education for Sustainability

The *National Action Plan* (NAP)(<http://www.deh.gov.au/education/nap/index.html>) seeks to address in a substantive and effective way, the current needs of environmental education in Australia. NAP is intended to provide leadership to the many different sectors involved in environmental education activities and promote better coordination of these activities.

The NAP is intended to be a starting point for enhanced national effort in support of Australia's commitment to ecologically sustainable development (ESD).

The Way Forward

The community consultative process associated with *Today Shapes Tomorrow* (Environment Australia, Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage, January 1999), identified key themes critical in developing a national approach to coordinating environmental education services.

These themes include:

1. development of a national framework for environmental education activities
2. raising the profile of environmental education in Australia
3. better coordination of environmental education activities
4. greater access to quality materials
5. more professional development opportunities for teachers in the formal education sector
6. more integration of environmental education principles into mainstream education activities
7. better resourcing of community organisations involved in environmental education

The Commonwealth, in particular the Environment and Heritage Portfolio, is showing leadership in environmental education through:

- development of a national environmental education strategy to better coordinate activities
- provision of high quality accessible and relevant support services for environmental education
- provision of funding to support contributions already being made by states and territories, industry and the community.

This Alliance strategic plan for the **Queensland Environmentally Sustainable Schools Initiative (QESSI)** is our way of supporting and encouraging ongoing development of this National Action Plan.

Important Links



Links to other Environmental Education for Sustainability Planning and Actions

This Plan links to other environmental education for sustainability planning on a state, national and international basis. It has been developed to support local to regional implementation of the statewide approach including strategies and actions that are based on national principles.

It represents an important link and supports the global sustainability education response to key environmental and social issues of our time. In this regard, the Plan will contribute to the intended outcomes of the United Nations – Decade for Education for Sustainable Development 2005 – 2014 (UNESCO, 2004, http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=27234&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).



Global

International programs that are similar to the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative have been developed in many countries. These include over 10,000 Eco Schools in 30 countries, mainly European, 16,000 Green Schools in China, thousands of Eco Schools across America and dozens of EnviroSchools in New Zealand.

The Queensland Initiative, including its strategic plan, builds on and contributes to the structure, strategies and concepts of these programs across the globe.



National

Within the auspices of the National Action Plan for Environmental Education, an active Sustainable Schools Working Group of the National Environmental Education Network (NEEN) aims to coordinate and share best practice between all Australian states and territories.

Through NEEN, a common set of agreed elements for any Sustainable Schools Initiative have been developed. (see background information Part F). The QESSI Alliance Strategic Plan incorporates these elements, learns from and builds on the work of other states to date, and seeks to provide a strategic approach that other states can replicate, or utilise in their ongoing management planning and implementation.

State

This Plan aims to bring together key stakeholders from the 'environmental education for a sustainable future' service industry for schools in Queensland. This includes government and non-government agencies, other community organisations and industry.

Its purpose is to coordinate and build capacity in delivering quality outcomes for schools in their move towards more sustainable practices and curricula. These organisations are listed as Alliance members throughout this strategic plan. This Plan compliments and supports a wide range of other state government, education systems, community and industry initiatives related to sustainability, including strategies and action plans for protection of biodiversity, reduction in greenhouse emissions, enhancing community life and so on.

Regional

Regional implementation is a key component of this plan. Hubs of support services will be developed within regions across Queensland. They will act as 'focus points' to assist schools in developing, implementing and monitoring School Environmental Management Plans (SEMPs). This includes becoming environmentally sustainable and including environmental education within their curriculum.

These Hubs could be existing outdoor and environmental education centres, both within Education Queensland and other agencies, or other facilities. Regional groups can develop regional implementation plans with associated investment strategies. These will be the basis upon which support from the QESSI Alliance and its steering committee will be delivered.

Schools

The QESSI Alliance Strategic Plan will link directly to participating schools SEMPs with correlating performance measurement indicators in the areas of educational, environmental, economic and social outcomes.

These outcomes can be aggregated across all schools to report on our progress towards more sustainable schools and communities, and form key contributions to regional, state and national 'State of the Environment' reports. They can also be used to accredit or acknowledge individual schools and regions for their success and progress in achieving standards and goals.