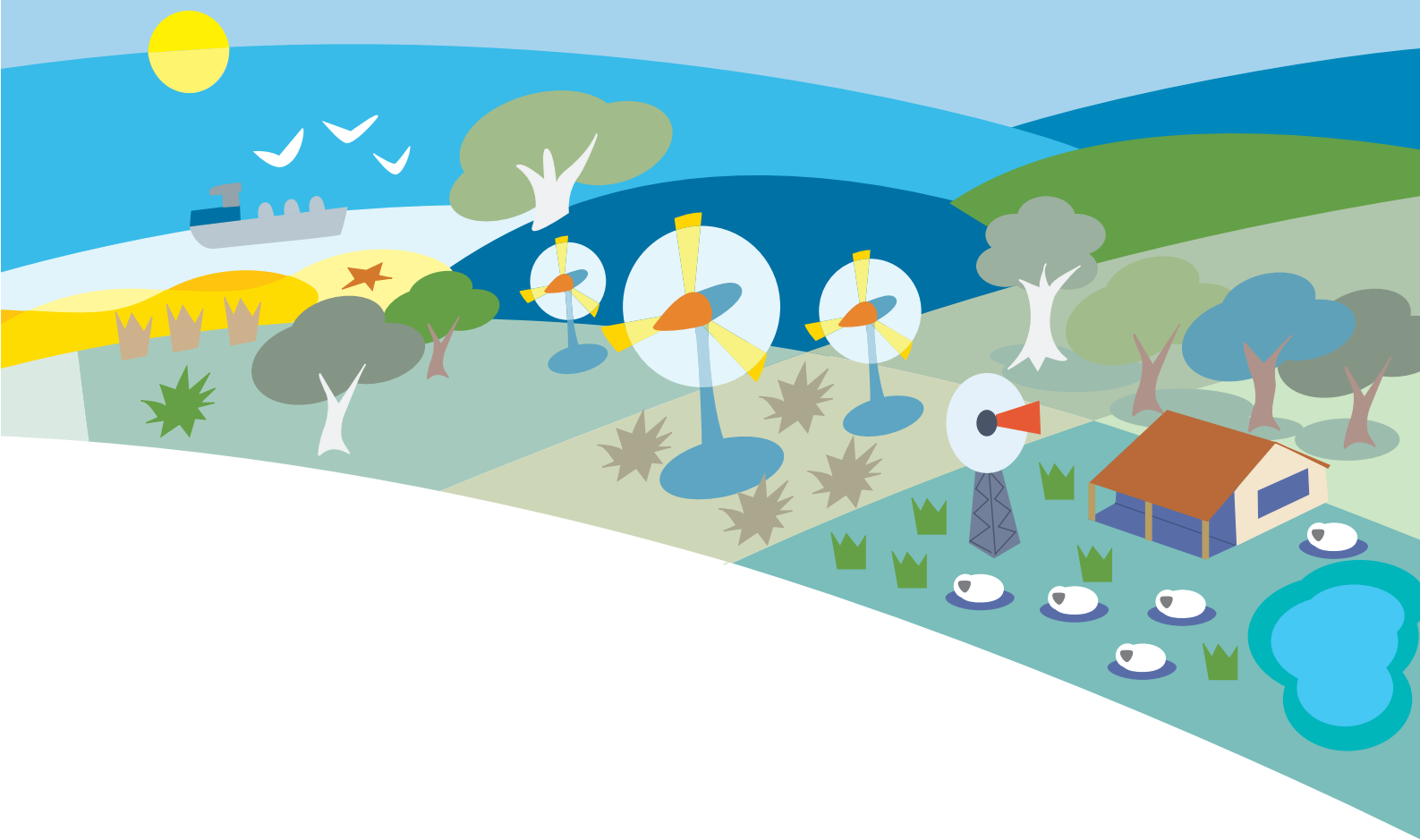


ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION POLICY FOR SCHOOLS





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Environmental education policy for schools
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Foreword

Environmental education is our way to the future. While empowering individuals to restore and maintain the Earth's natural systems, it also supports the wellbeing of future generations by promoting sustainable lifestyles.

This policy statement is designed to support effective environmental education programs in government schools in New South Wales. It provides guidelines on the management of school resources in accordance with ecologically sustainable practice and serves as a starting point for addressing global environmental issues.

The first Environmental Education Curriculum Statement K-12 was released in 1989 and focused on students gaining a sense of personal responsibility for their own environment. Since then, the principle of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) has been internationally recognised and now places local actions in the context of global responsibility.


In 1999, field studies centres were renamed environmental education centres (EECs) to reflect the broader role that environmental education is now playing in schools. Zoo education centres and environmental education centres in NSW are effective in demonstrating ecologically sustainable development to students. This is vital to the development of environmentally aware and responsible citizens who will advocate for the environment in the future.

The New South Wales Government is a world leader in supporting environmental education in schools, with particular attention being given to *Agenda 21*, a global policy outcome of the 1992 Earth Summit.

Agenda 21 has been recognised by the New South Wales Government as the basis for an internationally agreed course of action towards sustainability. This has led to legislation in a number of areas, including the *Protection of the Environment Amendment (Environmental Education) Act, 1998*.

The Government supports schools in developing environmental and ethical awareness in their students, and more importantly, their growth in competence to identify and address environmental issues.

I commend the Environmental Education Policy to you with confidence and trust that you will apply its aims and objectives to your teaching programs.



John Aquilina, MP
Minister

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1. Introduction

This policy replaces the *Environmental Education Curriculum Statement K-12* released in 1989. It is based on the principles of ecologically sustainable development endorsed by the New South Wales Government and reflects the findings of the New South Wales Council on Environmental Education.

The adoption of the policy is mandatory for all government schools from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Environmental education is the responsibility of the whole school community. It is more than a curriculum issue and involves schools in managing resources and grounds in a way that causes no significant damage to the environment and considers the needs of future generations.

The comprehensive approach to environmental education outlined in this policy will enable students to participate actively in improving the school environment, address local environmental issues, form sound judgements on global environmental issues, play an active role and participate actively as global citizens in protecting the environment.

The environment is the aggregate of all the conditions that support living things. In turn, living things, including humans, are all interactive parts of the environment. The environment consists of both natural and human-made systems. The natural environment includes the bio-system that supports all living things. The built environment is the human-made system, which is supported by the natural environment. The state of the natural environment ultimately determines the quality and survival of life on Earth.

Environmental education is a lifelong multi-disciplinary approach to learning that helps people to understand and appreciate the environment and their connection to and impact on it.

Environmental education is a process which develops awareness, knowledge and understanding of the environment, positive and balanced attitudes towards it and skills which will enable students to participate in assessing the state of the environment.

Environmental education prepares us for an ecologically sustainable future. It empowers individuals to maintain and restore the Earth's natural systems and fosters support for the wellbeing of future generations by promoting sustainable lifestyles. This requires understanding of the need to achieve a balance between the environmental, social and economic impacts of development.

Environmental education involves respecting and valuing the achievements of the past and supporting the preservation of those aspects of the built environment which remind us of those achievements.

Environmental education also has a spiritual focus, inspiring an emotional and sensitised response from people, not only in their appreciation of the wonders of the natural world, but making them feel at one with the environment.

This **Environmental education policy** is designed to guide schools in developing and enhancing environmental education programs that equip students with the understandings and skills required for active and informed participation in managing the environment. Most importantly, the policy aims to produce students who understand the importance of caring for the environment and minimising society's impact on the environment, in order to secure a better quality of life for present and future generations.

This policy describes:

- the rationale for environmental education
- the aims and objectives of environmental education
- the three focus areas of environmental education
- the development of a school environmental management plan, and
- a framework for evaluating and monitoring the implementation of environmental education in schools.

This environmental education policy requires schools to develop a school environmental management plan that addresses three focus areas:

- curriculum
- management of resources, and
- management of school grounds.



Environmental Education Centre set up by Burrumbuttock Public School

2. Rationale

Complex changes to the world's natural systems are occurring rapidly. Some of these changes are **global**, as in the case of the enhanced greenhouse effect and global warming. Often they are **regional**, as with the increasing incidence of blue-green algae in our river systems. Often too, the damage is **local**, such as soil erosion and salinisation resulting from land clearing.

Industrial and urban waste and the degradation of agricultural land associated with land clearing, the use of chemicals and poor land management, have all placed stress on the environment. The results of environmental stress are increasingly apparent in such effects as global warming, soil salinisation, air and water pollution, the contamination and degradation of land, and ozone depletion.

Agenda 21, the global initiative that was drawn up at the United Nations' Earth Summit in 1992, provides the policy framework for international action on the environment. Underlying *Agenda 21* is the principle of ecologically sustainable development, that is “*a pattern of activities that meet the needs of the current generation without prejudicing the ability of future generations to meet their needs*”. Ecologically sustainable development relates to those human activities that compromise a balance between economical, environmental and social forces.

Any effective policy framework for protecting and managing the natural and built environments requires an integrated approach: a sound system of government regulations, scientific and technical knowledge, international relevance, a capacity for research and development, effective communication, community participation and responsible behaviour across all sectors of the community and government.

Environmental education seeks to achieve the level of competence and citizenship in all students that will enable them to contribute to the achievement of sustainable societies. Through environmental education, students acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to form judgements about sustainable lifestyles and to participate in environmental decision-making. They can also acquire technical skills associated with environmental management, such as environmental cost accounting and life cycle analysis.

When environmental education is incorporated into the school curriculum, students:

- learn **about** the environment
- develop skills to investigate and solve issues **in** the environment
- acquire attitudes of care and concern **for** the environment
- adopt behaviours and practices which **protect** the environment, and
- understand the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

3. Aims and objectives of environmental education

AIM OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

This Environmental Education Policy aims to foster students' understanding of the environment as an integrated system, and to develop attitudes and skills which are conducive to the achievement of ecologically sustainable development.

OBJECTIVES OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Curriculum objectives

Students will develop:

- knowledge and understandings about:
 - the nature and function of ecosystems and how they are interrelated (K1)
 - the impact of people on environments (K2)
 - the role of the community, politics and market forces in environmental decision-making (K3)
 - the principles of ecologically sustainable development (K4) and
 - career opportunities associated with the environment (K5)
- skills in:
 - applying technical expertise within an environmental context (S1)
 - identifying and assessing environmental problems (S2)
 - communicating environmental problems to others (S3)
 - resolving environmental problems (S4)
 - adopting behaviours and practices that protect the environment (S5)
 - evaluating the success of their actions (S6)

- values and attitudes relating to:
 - a respect for life on Earth (V1)
 - an appreciation of their cultural heritage (V2) and
 - a commitment to act for the environment by supporting long-term solutions to environmental problems (V3).

Objectives for the management of resources

Schools will:

- take a whole-school approach to policy development to include such environmental aspects as purchasing, energy monitoring, water consumption and waste disposal
- employ **best practice** in management of resources and
- identify **learning opportunities** for students resulting from practices in the management of resources.

Objectives for the management of school grounds

Schools will:

- manage school grounds in accordance with the principles of **ecologically sustainable development**
- develop school grounds as part of the overall school plan
- identify learning opportunities for students resulting from the management of school grounds.



Outdoor classroom, Harwood Island Public School

4. Focus areas

This policy has three focus areas:

- curriculum
- management of resources, and
- management of school grounds.

To achieve the objectives of environmental education, schools must address all three focus areas in ways meaningful to their school communities.

CURRICULUM

Schools should maximise every opportunity to develop students' capacity to support an ecologically sustainable world.

Schools will be able to achieve the objectives of the *Environmental education policy for schools* in the context of key learning areas and subjects as they work to achieve the outcomes of syllabuses.

In implementing this focus area of the policy, schools are expected to:

- identify and address those outcomes which are specific to environmental education in syllabuses K-12
- integrate the teaching of environmental education topics and issues to support outcomes in other syllabuses
- use the opportunities provided by special events and school community actions to enhance those student learning outcomes related to environmental education.

Learning opportunities supporting the curriculum

Environmental education is best approached as an across-curriculum strategy integrated into teaching and learning programs from Kindergarten to Year 12. This can occur:

- through study of the mandatory syllabuses which contain specific environmental education outcomes. These occur in such syllabuses as Human Society and Its Environment and Science and Technology in Years K-6; and Science, Geography, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education and Design and Technology in Years 7-10
- by integrating environmental education into other subjects, such as English, Mathematics and the Creative Arts, where syllabus outcomes can be taught through environmental issues and topics.



Environmental Education Centre at Shortland Wetland Centre

For example, the collecting and recording of data during a school environmental audit could support outcomes related to mathematical understandings and skills

- by linking environmental education with other across-curriculum perspectives and policies such as Aboriginal Education, Gender Equity and Multicultural Education. For example, the implications of cultural heritage are important when studying issues of environmental management.

Learning opportunities outside the classroom

What is learnt inside the classroom about environmental education needs to be reinforced and supported by what happens outside the classroom. Sometimes even the classroom itself can be transferred to another location to enhance students' learning about environmental education. To support the curriculum objectives of environmental education, schools need to maximise the opportunities for student learning provided by all aspects of the school community. These opportunities include:

- using special environmental events, days, celebrations and projects to complement learning in the curriculum
- involving students in investigating, maintaining and improving the school and local environment
- using the community to investigate practical and real-life situations
- incorporating outside programs and services into school programs to bring learning to life

- utilising the facilities of environmental education centres and zoo education centres and participating in such programs as Landcare and Streamwatch.

All teachers have a role to play in supporting environmental education through the curriculum by:

- providing a learning environment which supports students as they develop an awareness, understanding and appreciation of the natural and built environments. These should be studied at local, national and global levels
- identifying opportunities to increase students' understanding of contemporary environmental issues, such as global warming
- giving special emphasis to local environmental problems (i.e. think globally, act locally)
- providing opportunities for students to develop into effective and committed environmental citizens and advocates
- introducing students to environment-related career opportunities and supporting students as they pursue those pathways.

MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

Schools should manage resources according to the principles of ecologically sustainable development, i.e. “avoid and reduce, reuse and recycle”, and minimising waste generation as much as possible.

In implementing this focus area of the policy, schools are expected to develop a plan to:

- address the management of energy, products, materials, waste and water
- employ best practice in the sustainable management of resources and comply with government regulations, laws and policies, such as the Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy (WRAPP), stormwater legislation and the Litter Prevention Program
- maximise learning opportunities created by the school's management of resources to make links with the curriculum.

The efficient management of resources within the school provides a range of benefits, including:

- improvements to the school environment (e.g. reduction in litter and waste, improvements in health and safety)
- cost savings (e.g. savings in energy and on waste and water bills)
- a sense of community and pride in the school (e.g. redesigning and rehabilitating the school grounds)
- participatory democracy in the management of the school with respect to decisions that directly affect the students

- increased student confidence and skills in making decisions on environmental issues
- involvement of the local community, support from business and local publicity, and
- a model for improved future behaviour on the part of students, community members and organisations.

While water, electricity, products, materials and waste are integral components of the management of resources in a school, schools may focus on other issues, depending on their location, climate, history and context. These could include:

- safety (e.g. toxic chemicals)
- traffic (e.g. inside and outside the school)
- environmental management strategies relating to the canteen (e.g. green canteens)
- purchasing policy (e.g. packaging)
- strategies for gaining the commitment of students
- use of natural light and renewable energy
- noise
- sustainable management of resources during construction and demolition
- watering systems (e.g. recycling and maintenance).

MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL GROUNDS

Developing strategies linked to the school's grounds is one of the most effective ways of carrying out environmental education programs, not only as a curriculum initiative, but also as a means of contributing to sustainable practices within the community.

In implementing this focus area of the policy, schools are expected to:

- use and develop their grounds and buildings to enhance and achieve the objectives of environmental education and syllabus outcomes
- use their grounds and buildings as learning areas
- identify and implement long-term strategies that will rehabilitate areas of the grounds and buildings and reflect best practice in sustainable management.

Many schools have developed their grounds and surrounding areas for teaching and learning. Some schools have achieved this by employing principles that include linking the curriculum to the grounds, encouraging a long-term approach to their educational use, and developing learning places or spaces in and around schools, to encourage students and the community to interact with their environment. The most effective projects in school

grounds are those that have been planned and involve active participation by students, teachers, the school executive, ancillary staff, parents and the wider community.

The management of school grounds can also be linked to other community projects, such as bush care and nature conservation projects.

The management of school grounds is more than a mere beautification process. It involves activities that link directly to the curriculum and the whole-school plan and demonstrates the principles of ecologically sustainable development.



Indonesian outdoor learning area at Teven Tintenbar Public School

5. The school environmental management plan

This policy provides schools with a new approach to environmental education through the development of a school environmental management plan. School environmental planning concurs with trends in industry and government, where environmental management systems (EMS) are increasingly being introduced in accordance with the International Standard ISO14001. The Standard requires industry and government organisations to adopt sustainable practices at a local level. This International Standard is accepted throughout Australia and is endorsed by most NSW government departments.

A school environmental management plan is a tool to help schools plan and coordinate environmental education. The plan assists schools to achieve the objectives in the three focus areas:

- curriculum
- management of resources, and
- management of school grounds.

All schools must develop their own school environmental management plan that works to a schedule and is implemented in stages.

The school environmental management plan should:

- be incorporated into the whole-school plan
- link school administration and management with curriculum plans
- be organised under the three focus areas.

The most successful school environmental management plans are those where the process of change involves:

- active participation by students, staff (including teachers, general assistants, cleaners, office and canteen staff), parents, local community members, representatives from government and non-government agencies
- a holistic perspective which employs an integrated systems approach to planning and includes the whole site, the whole school community and all aspects of the curriculum

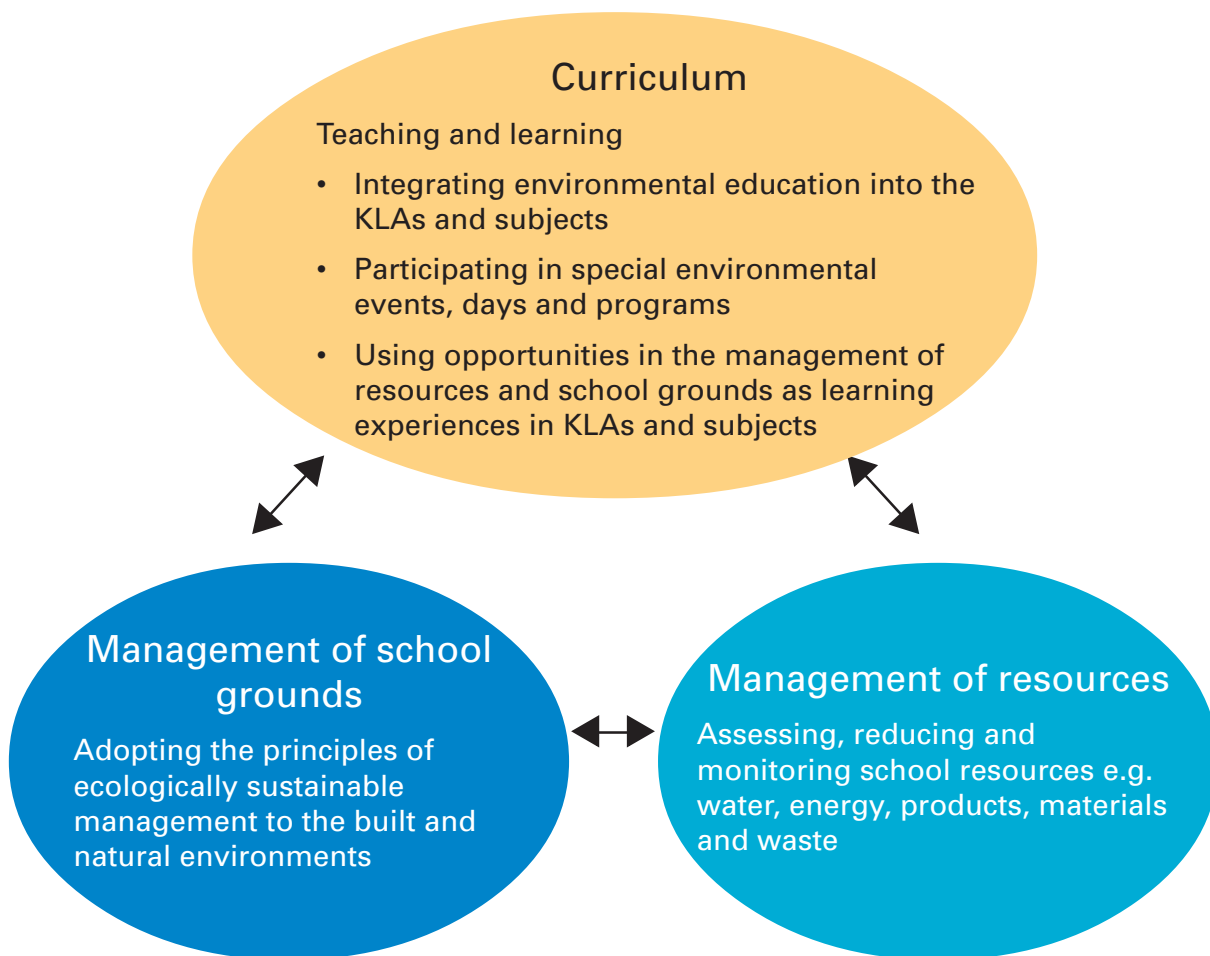
- a long-term vision encompassing continuing consideration of environmental management as part of a school's ongoing management plan.

Once in place, the school environmental management plan will provide school leaders with an integrated approach to the environmental management of their schools as well as a rich source of learning opportunities in environmental education.

Schools should evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of their school environmental management plan at regular intervals.

WHOLE-SCHOOL PLAN

The school environmental management plan



6. Evaluating, monitoring and reporting

Evaluating, monitoring and reporting are fundamental and continuing aspects of implementing environmental education. Schools should evaluate the implementation of the environmental management plan in terms of the three focus areas, **curriculum**, **management of school resources**, and **management of school grounds**.

The framework, “Stages in becoming an environmentally active school”, provides a tool for evaluating and monitoring the implementation of environmental education in the school.

The framework’s main purpose is to illustrate a sequence of stages that schools might pass through to become an environmentally responsible school. Schools can use the framework as a guide to help them assess and evaluate environmental education at different phases of its implementation.





The framework also helps schools to move forward in the implementation of their environmental education policy.



Schools may use the framework as:

- a starting point to assess where they stand in terms of their planning and implementation of environmental education
- an indicator for monitoring improvement and progress in implementing environmental education
- a basis for summary evaluation at various points in the implementation of environmental education, and
- a guide for annual reporting.



STEPS IN BECOMING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACTIVE SCHOOL

Step	Whole-school planning	Curriculum	Management of resources	Management of school grounds
No commitment 	Lack of interest in environmental education (EE) at ancillary, teacher and executive level.	Commitment to environmental issues in T&L programs is low or non-existent. Topics are taught in an ad hoc and unplanned way. No classroom programs in place to address curriculum objectives in EE.	EE and environmental issues are not considered in any school purchasing, resource use or waste management.	There is no consideration of the environmental impact of the use of the school grounds. There is no consideration given to using the school grounds for EE.
1. Awareness 	Individual teachers, ancillary and/or executive are concerned about the lack of support for EE and wish to take action. Staff participates in an EE inservice.	Individual teachers program for EE where mandated by the syllabus. Some environmental issues may be discussed in other subjects.	Individual teachers promote EE activities in resource management. There is little executive support for efforts towards “best practice” in management of resources. Purchasing is ad hoc and does not consider ecological sustainable development.	Ad hoc landscaping of school grounds takes place. No long-term plans. Strategies for school grounds are based only on such issues as equipment, shade, safety and seating.
2. Planning 	A formal school environmental management committee is established and objectives determined. Committee structure includes ancillary staff and community representatives. Subcommittees are established.	EE is being taught in the mandatory syllabuses and, to some extent, in other areas. A subcommittee is formed to conduct an audit.	A subcommittee is formed to conduct an audit. Subcommittee includes teachers, ancillary staff, students and community members. The subcommittee considers student involvement in the audit. Joint planning with external providers begins.	School grounds subcommittee is formed. The committee consists of teaching and ancillary staff, along with students and community members.
3. Early implementation 	Audits are under way. Policies and practices begin to reflect the views promoted by the EE committee.	Specific concepts and content are integrated into particular KLA subjects and year programs. Opportunities for EE to be included in management of resources and management of school grounds are being explored. The subcommittee conducts an audit.	Audit is under way and provides information for developing strategies to reduce the school’s resource use and waste production. Students participate in the auditing process.	The subcommittee conducts an audit of the school grounds. Students participate in the auditing process.

<p>4a. Consolidation</p> 	<p>Audits have been carried out in all focus areas and subcommittees are developing action plans.</p>	<p>The audit identifies current EE requirements of mandatory syllabuses and opportunities to integrate EE into other KLAs, and the management of resources and school grounds.</p> <p>Action plans are being formulated. Most students meet several environmental education objectives.</p>	<p>The audit has been completed.</p> <p>The subcommittee begins to examine programs and practices in the management of resources</p> <p>EE opportunities are explored.</p> <p>An action plan is developed in purchasing, resource use and waste management.</p>	<p>Audit reveals relevant environmental issues.</p> <p>Subcommittee develops an action plan based on achievable objectives.</p>
<p>4b. Further consolidation</p> 	<p>Action plans have been finalised in all focus areas and have been passed on to the school environment management committee.</p> <p>The environment management committee has integrated and prioritised the action plans.</p> <p>A school environmental management plan has been formulated and implemented.</p>	<p>The action plan has been passed on to the environment management committee, prioritised and integrated into the school environmental management plan.</p> <p>Teaching and learning programs are in place in all stages to ensure sequential development of environmental objectives in mandatory syllabuses.</p> <p>T&L programs in place which articulate opportunities to address all the EE objectives.</p> <p>Opportunities for environmental education associated with special events, programs, management of resources and school grounds are incorporated into T&L programs. Students meet most curriculum objectives successfully.</p>	<p>The action plan has been passed on to the environment management committee and has been prioritised and integrated into the school environmental management plan.</p> <p>The school environmental management plan is being followed, purchasing is being integrated and on-going data collection is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.</p> <p>The school staff, students and community members participate in activities that exemplify “best practice”.</p>	<p>The action plan has been passed on to the environment management committee and has been prioritised and integrated into the school environmental management plan.</p> <p>The school environmental management plan is in place and strategies are progressively implemented. Evaluation and review structures are established.</p> <p>The school community is improving the grounds. Grounds are being used as a teaching resource.</p>
<p>5. Sustainability</p>	<p>The school shows commitment to a school environmental management plan as part of the school management plan. Effective action plans are in place and are regularly reviewed. Objectives for all focus areas are being met. Progress is reported in the school’s annual report</p> <p>The school is a model for others to follow and a logical and holistic plan is evident.</p>	<p>The school has effective environmental education integrated into all stages and KLAs, where appropriate. The mandatory curriculum is taught effectively and opportunities are maximised for EE including special events, special programs, and management of resources and school grounds. School demonstrates that it has implemented programs that address all EE curriculum objectives. Programs are based on environmental citizenship and personal action. Curriculum model is an inspiration for other schools.</p>	<p>All objectives for management of resources are achieved: purchasing, resource use and waste management are integrated across the whole school. “Best practice” is employed emphasising sustainability of resources and minimal environmental impact. Learning opportunities for students are incorporated. Progress is visible and is reported. The school’s management of resources is an example for students and the broader community to follow.</p>	<p>Objectives relating to school grounds are fully met. Management is consistent with the principles of ecological sustainable development. Grounds are developed to enhance environmental education. Progress is reported and the school environmental management plan is reviewed. School community demonstrates personal commitment to the school grounds. The grounds are a diverse learning environment that has positive impacts on local and global environments and is a model for others to follow</p>

7. Glossary



Agenda 21	<p>Adopted by the UN in 1992. It is UNCED's "blueprint for action to the 21st century". Notable for its extensive coverage of environment and development matters as inextricably linked issues. It deals with the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development, conservation and management of resources for development, strengthening the role of major stakeholder groups, including non-government organisations (NGOs), financial resources, technology transfer, education, training and public awareness.</p> <p>While it is merely a blueprint that does not have the force of treaties, protocols or international agreements, it is nonetheless an important body of agreement acknowledged by virtually all national governments.</p> <p>Many councils in NSW have developed a local Agenda 21 to promote sustainability.</p>
Assessment	<p>The process of identifying, gathering and interpreting evidence about students' learning. Assessment provides information on students' achievement and progress. It assists in setting the direction for ongoing teaching and learning.</p>
Civics	<p>Reflects a country's social and political system. In Australia these systems include institutional and social structures, such as parliament, the constitution, political parties, lobby groups etc.</p>
Citizenship	<p>Is the participation of a person in his/her country's social and political systems. The person's attitudes, values and beliefs will influence the form of this participation.</p>
Community	<p>A social grouping whose members share space, government and social organisation. The community can refer to either a small group or a large population and may have a common culture and heritage. The term may also refer to a group of organisms, both plant and animal, living together in an ecologically related fashion in a defined region.</p>
Earth Summit, the	<p>The UN conference on environment and development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.</p> <p>It evolved out of the UN's desire to formulate a "global agenda for change" that would include long-term strategies for achieving sustainable development. It stressed: the importance of greater cooperation among countries at different stages of economic and social development, taking account of the interrelationships between people, resources and the environment; and dealing more effectively with environmental concerns at the international level. The Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Forests Statement were adopted at the conference.</p>

Ecologically sustainable development (ESD)	<p>Ecologically sustainable development is a pattern of activities which meet the needs of the current generation without prejudicing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.</p> <p>It requires that there is no unreasonable depletion of any resource. There must be no significant damage to the environment, and there must be no significant decline in social stability.</p>
Ecosystem	The plants and animals of an ecological community together with their environment, forming an interacting system of activities and functions regarded as a unit.
Enhanced greenhouse effect	A warming effect in the atmosphere surrounding the earth as a result of increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere because of human activity.
Environmental cost accounting	Determining the monetary value of the environmental aspects of human activity.
Environmental education centres	<p>Established by the Department of Education and Training as venues for students to participate in environmental activities.</p> <p>The environment provides the stimulus for across-curriculum activities. Formerly known as field studies centres.</p>
Evaluation	The process of making judgements about the effectiveness of a teaching and learning program.
Interrelationships	The condition wherein two or more things relate to each other e.g. soil, vegetation and climate.
ISO14001	This is an international standard that specifies requirements for an environmental management system. The Standard enables an organisation to formulate a policy and set of objectives that take into account legislative requirements and information about significant environmental impacts. It applies to those environmental aspects that the organisation can control or over which it can have an influence. While schools are not expected to receive ISO14001 accreditation, the principles of an environmental management system can be modified to suit its needs and situation.
Learnsapes	<p>“Places where a learning program has been designed to permit its users to interact with an environment. Learnsapes may be natural or built, interior or exterior. They may be in or near schools and should relate to one or more of the eight key learning areas”. (The School Learnsapes Trust). See Support Document.</p> <p>Learnsapes are more effective if the school and its community design them with an emphasis on ecological sustainability, rather than relying on one person for long-term continuation and survival.</p> <p>The program is similar to the Learning Through Landscapes Program operating in the UK, where school grounds are rehabilitated, redesigned and used for specific learning activities.</p>

Life cycle analysis	Examines the total environmental impact of products, processes and activities by quantifying their environmental effects along the life cycle, from extraction of raw materials through processing, manufacturing, transportation, selling, use and on to final disposal.
National Greenhouse Strategy	The Strategy developed through a coordinated effort between the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, provides a strategic direction for Australia's greenhouse response and is the primary mechanism through which our international commitments on climate change will be met.
Natural capital	This refers to the earth's natural resources and ecological systems that provide vital life support services to society and all living things. These services are of immense economic value; some are literally priceless, since they have no known substitute.
New South Wales Council on Environmental Education	The NSW Government established the Council by Act of Parliament. The Council is required to submit to government an environmental education plan to be tabled to each House of Parliament. The plan will influence and reflect the implementation of environmental education in schools.
Sustainability	Possessing the necessary resources to maintain or improve the current state of the environment. See Ecologically Sustainable Development.
Zoo education centres	There are two centres in NSW. These are located at Taronga Zoo and Western Plains Zoo (Dubbo). Programs focus on environmental issues, particularly endangered species, food chains and habitats.