

Introduction

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It is not the strongest species that will survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

Charles Darwin

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.

John F Kennedy

What is the purpose of this section?

To introduce:

- the handbook and explain its uses
- the stakeholders involved in the project
- the rationale and context of the project.

What is this handbook for?

This handbook serves two main purposes:

- It is a resource handbook developed for the Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project. It was intended to support the mentoring and workshop processes of the project. It includes information on the key principles of Education for Sustainability and identifies various tools for stakeholder engagement.
- It was intended that after further development from input from project participants, the handbook would be used by staff from local government authorities wishing to replicate the processes undertaken in this project.

What does this handbook contain?

The handbook consists of a number of sections containing:

- information and relevant documentation from the Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project
- the concepts of sustainability
- the principles of education and learning-based strategies for change towards sustainability
- tools to implement the above in policy and practice
- additional information, including suggestions for further reading.

This resource was developed at the initial stages of the Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project. It was revised during and after the project when the stakeholders involved, including participants, project partners and facilitators had an opportunity to reflect on the project processes, learnings and outcomes.

How should this handbook be used?

The handbook is intended to be used as a resource to support the mentoring processes that underpin this project. It is not designed to be read from cover to cover as a formal report (although you can do this if you wish), but rather to dip into or use relevant sections as you see fit to meet your needs. The handbook is in separate sections, in a dip-in, dip-out form that can be further developed. The intention is for this to be a living, learning document that can grow.

? Throughout the handbook, you will come across the following information boxes.

? Please feel free to add to this handbook and modify it to suit your purposes.

At the end of each section you will find a list of further information/readings on that topic. Where possible, we have tried to include information relevant to local government.

Who funded the Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability Project?

This project was funded by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA). DEWHA develops and implements national policy, programs and legislation to protect and conserve Australia's natural environment and cultural heritage. The Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project was an initiative of the Sustainability Education Unit at DEWHA.

For more information visit www.deh.gov.au/education.

Who facilitated this project?

The project was conceptualised and facilitated by the Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability (ARIES) based at Macquarie University. Daniella Tilbury, ARIES Director, conceptualised the initiative and developed the project. Fil Cerone was Project Director and a mentor. Lynn Delgado was a mentor and author of this handbook.

For more information about ARIES and its previous projects please visit www.aries.mq.edu.au.

Why was this project funded?

The need to build capacity within local government in Education for Sustainability was identified by the National Environmental Education Council (NEEC) at its 16th meeting in September 2004. Similarly, a national review of community Environmental Education practice across Australia¹ recommended that funding be sought to support capacity building at this level. This report argued that there is a need to value-add to current initiatives by introducing mentoring programs for local government so that they can utilise Education for Sustainability approaches effectively in their work.

The same report also identified the need to research and develop a resource for local government educators on learning-based strategies for change and stakeholder engagement processes. That resource is this handbook.

This project draws upon previous initiatives developed by Macquarie University in NSW^{2 3 4}. These initiatives have shown the potential of mentoring processes in achieving change towards sustainability in local government through education,

This project has been developed in the belief that:

- *the ideas and concepts of Education for Sustainability offer an effective way to grapple with the changes necessary for us to move towards a more sustainable future*
- *local government staff have a critical role to play in the move towards a sustainable future*
- *there is a need to build capacity of local government staff in developing new ways of thinking and doing in order for change towards sustainability to occur*
- *learning is best undertaken in an active, supportive and non-threatening environment and should be workplace or context specific*
- *local government needs to integrate sustainability across all facets of local government. This will require new and innovative ways of thinking and doing, in particular it requires a more systemic approach*
- *local government needs to more actively engage stakeholders within the community in participatory processes for Education for Sustainability.*

Who was this project for?

This Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project acknowledges that whilst there are many local government sustainability initiatives happening throughout Australia, many are hampered by the lack of capacity, training and workplace support of their staff. This means that many struggle to implement programs effectively. Specifically, they have limited experience and training in how to use education and learning-based strategies for change towards sustainability.

Many local government employees are seeking partnerships or creating their own networks (e.g. sustainability educators⁵) to overcome this. Local government staff is the largest stakeholder group seeking formal education in Environmental Education (EE) and Education for Sustainability (EfS) qualifications across Australia. However, there are few educational opportunities for local government staff and representatives to learn for sustainability in a way which is directly relevant to their workplace or context. This project was therefore conceived as a way of addressing this need.

See 'The Project Process' for more specific information about this project.

Who participated in this project?

A total of 18 local government participants were selected for this project, two participants coming from each of nine local councils across Australia.

The participating councils were:

Council	Project
Auburn Council (NSW)	Towards Sustainability
City of Darebin (VIC)	Going Places – Travel Reward Scheme Sustainable Homes Program
City of South Perth (WA)	Sustainability Strategy
City of Whittlesea (VIC)	Environmental Events Program 'Spring into Composting' Community Promotion
Coorong District Council (SA)	Local Action Plan
Eurobodalla Shire Council (NSW)	Best Practice Integration of NRM into the planning and management of the Eurobodalla Shire
Moonee Valley City Council (VIC)	Integrating ESD into all Council programs
Noosa Council (QLD)	Living Smart Program
Pittwater Council (NSW)	Sustainable Pittwater 2030

An Expression of Interest (EOI) was developed for the project and advertised widely through email forums and each of the state Local Government Association's networks. The criteria used for selection of participants included:

Essential Selection Criteria

1. You must clearly identify an **existing Council environmental or sustainability project/s** that will be used as the basis for your participation in the mentoring process. The existing Council project/s **must use** learning or education as the basis for achieving outcomes.
2. You must be able to identify **two members from Council** who can commit to participating in all aspects of the ARIES mentoring process from start to finish. The two identified members of Council can be working collaboratively on one project or on two separate projects as long as both projects use learning and education as the basis for achieving outcomes. **The identified members can**

be staff and/or Councillors. If they are staff members, they can be located in different departments. Councillors similarly should have some practical involvement in the nominated Council project. **Two neighbouring Councils** can put in a collaborative application on a joint project if they wish (i.e. one person from each Council).

3. You must supply **written support from senior management** (i.e. GM or CEO) actively encouraging the Council to participate in the project*.
4. You must be able to **demonstrate how you will work collaboratively** with the local government association in your state as well as other networks to ensure that the learnings and impact of this mentoring process continues once involvement by ARIES ceases.

Desirable Selection Criteria

1. You should be able to show how **your Council has committed itself to Education for Sustainability (EfS) and/or Agenda 21 initiatives** by supplying some evidence of the incorporation of some or all these principles into its daily operations (e.g. policies, employment of EfS officers, community engagement programs, etc).
2. You should be able to demonstrate how you envisage taking the learnings from this process and **extending those learnings** across the Council organisation.

Who were the key stakeholders in this project?

As well as the funding agency (DEWHA), the facilitators of this project (ARIES) and the local government participants, the project identified several **project partners**. A partnership approach was considered important to this project because this approach offers the possibility to^{6 7}:

- create collaboration between the stakeholders to generate longer term organisational change towards sustainability
- allow partners to combine talents and ideas in:
 - a) the development of the project
 - b) the dissemination of the project
- generate mutual support to maintain enthusiasm and commitment to the project
- bring together people with different perspectives
- generate wider networks and hence ensure that the project learnings and impacts are extended beyond the participants.

This partnership approach was seen as a significant opportunity to work with other key stakeholders in furthering Education for Sustainability approaches. From a practical perspective, it was anticipated that project partners would be capable of taking the learnings further afield and implementing similar mentoring programs in other local government organisations.

The following people and/or organisations agreed to be project partners:

- The Gould Group (formerly known as the Gould League)
- NSW Government Department of Environment & Conservation (DEC)

- Environs Australia
- ICLEI
- Sustainability Victoria
- Specific Local Government Associations.

The work of the Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project was overseen by a **Key Informant Group** (KIG) which comprised leaders and experienced practitioners in Education for Sustainability, Environmental Education, local government and mentoring from across the states and territories in Australia.

The KIG reviewed the handbook to ensure that the resources and project results were communicated in an accessible and relevant way, as well as ensuring that the project findings were communicated to a broader audience to promote the concept of mentoring as an effective tool for sustainability outcomes.

The following people, and/or organisations formed the Key Informant Group:

The Key Informant Group

Executive Officer, Western Port Greenhouse Alliance, Victoria
Team Leader Community & Government, Sustainability Victoria
Assistant Director, Environment Policy, Local Government Association, Canberra
Executive Officer, Youth Mentoring Network
Director, T Issues Consultancy, NSW
Manager Climate Change, Sustainability and Climate Change Division (SCCD) , Department of the Premier and Cabinet, South Australia
Director, Sydney Catchment Authority

What were the essential readings for the project?

? Two essential readings were identified for this project. These are available online.

- **Tilbury, D and Wortman, D (2004) *Engaging People in Sustainability* Commission on Education and Communication, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK
www.aries.mq.edu.au/portal/keydocs/envision.htm**
- **Tilbury, D and Ross, K (2006) *Living Change: Documenting good practice in Education for Sustainability in NSW* Macquarie University, Sydney and Nature Conservation Council, NSW
Available for download from www.aries.mq.edu.au and www.nccnsw.org.au.**

Also refer to the ARIES portal at www.aries.mq.edu.au/portal which offers a wealth of information on EfS, including international and national documents, key processes in EfS (e.g. envisioning, partnerships) and community education.

A further two important documents are:

- **Tilbury, D. and Cooke, K. (2005) *A National Review of Environmental Education and its Contribution to Sustainability in Australia: Frameworks for Sustainability*. Canberra: Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage and Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability – Volume 1
Available for download at www.aries.mq.edu.au**
- **Tilbury, D., Coleman, V., Jones, A. and MacMaster, K. (2005) 'A National Review of Environmental Education and its Contributions to Sustainability in Australia: Community Education' Canberra: Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage and the Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability (ARIES). Volume 3
Available at the ARIES website www.aries.mq.edu/au.**

Hard copies of these two publications are available from:
ariescoordinator@gse.mq.edu.au.



From *Education for Sustainability* (2001)
Eds Huckle J & Sterling S, Earthscan Publications, UK

References

¹ Tilbury, D., Coleman, V., Jones, A. and MacMaster, K. (2005) *A National Review of Environmental Education and its Contributions to Sustainability in Australia: Community Education*. Canberra: Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage and the Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability (ARIES).

² Tilbury, D. and Bowdler, L. (2003a) *Education for Sustainability in Clarence Valley Councils: Action Research, Learning and Mentoring*, Sydney: Macquarie University Available at www.gse.mq.edu.au/Research/staff/daniella_tilbury.shtml [Accessed 19 April 2006]

³ Tilbury, D. and Bowdler, L. (2003b) *Education for Sustainability in Cooks River Local Councils: Action Learning and Mentoring in Stormwater Community Education*, Sydney: Macquarie University

⁴ ILT Team (2004) 'Mentoring as a tool for workplace change: outcomes and lessons learnt from the It's a Living Thing Education for Sustainability Professional Development Program', Paper presented by Henderson, Garlick and Calvert to the *Effective Sustainability Education: What works? Why? Where to next? – Linking Research and Practice Conference*, University of Sydney, 18th – 20th February 2004

⁵ Sustainability Educators email discussion forum
<http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/sustainabilityeducators/>

⁶ Wilcox D (2002) A short guide to partnerships Available at www.partnerships.org.uk

⁷ Tilbury, D. and Wortman, D. (2004). *Engaging People in Sustainability*. p75, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. Available for download from www.aries.mq.edu.au