



25 August 2005

Dear Colleagues

Thank you for your contributions to the National Symposium on the DESD in Australia. I think everyone felt that it was an inspiring day, perhaps one that we should repeat each year during the Decade. What do you think?

One of the aims of the Symposium was to develop a strategic framework for the Decade for submission to the Australian National Commission for UNESCO and the Australian Government.

The following pages are the result of the inputs of the representatives of the more than seventy organisations who participated on the day.

We now invite your comments on the draft. The Framework is organised in five sections:

1. Goal, Objectives and Priorities of the Decade of ESD in Australia
2. Key stakeholders in the Decade of ESD in Australia
3. Strategies and Activities
4. Coordination of Activities across Local/Regional, State/Territory and National Levels
5. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

At the Symposium, group discussions provided advice on Sections 1, 3 and 4. We completed Sections 2 and 4 from the material in the group workbooks – and some of the ideas presented in the case studies and in materials submitted by organisations at and after the Symposium.

Please use “MS Word Track Changes” to provide suggestions for alternative and additional ideas (or deletions).

We will accept all submissions up to 9 September with a view to finalising the document in the next week.

Please send your edited file to me by email attachment at john.fien@rmit.edu.au

If you would like to send additional material, please do so in a separate attachment.

With best wishes, and my thanks once again.

John Fien
Symposium Convenor



TOWARDS A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE UN DESD IN AUSTRALIA

Introduction

This section provides advice on the development of a National Framework for the DESD Australia. It was developed from the input of representatives of over seventy national and state/territory organisations who met on 7 July 2005 on the invitation of the Australian National Commission for UNESCO and with the support of the Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage.

Participants at the National Symposium on 7 July 2005 met in stakeholder groups to contribute ideas for a draft National Framework. Following the Symposium, these ideas were collated and circulated for clarification and revision.

The draft National Framework presented below is the result of this extensive process of consultation. It is submitted to the Australian National Commission for UNESCO and the Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage as advice from the Australian community interested in Education for Sustainable Development to guide the development of a National Strategy for the development, implementation and evaluation of policy, programmes and activities during the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

The draft National Framework is organised in five sections:

1. Goal, Objectives and Priorities of the Decade of ESD in Australia
2. Key stakeholders in the Decade of ESD in Australia
3. Strategies and Activities
4. Coordination of Activities across Local/Regional, State/Territory and National Levels
5. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

1. GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Goal

The global vision for DESD is that Education for Sustainable Development is a means to achieve “a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from a quality education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation” (UNESCO International Implementation Scheme 2005, p. 26). Thus, the goal of the DESD in Australia is:

To integrate sustainability into national, state/territory and institutional education plans at all levels across all sectors by 2014 in order to enhance and transform societal capacity for achieving sustainability with improvements in the:

- conservation of Australia’s natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem health;
- vitality and prosperity of Australian business and industry while respecting the capacity of the earth’s natural systems; and
- active participatory involvement of citizens for harmony within Australia’s social and cultural diversity.

Objectives

To achieve this goal by 2014, the following objectives are recommended:

1. To clarify a common vision for ESD and DESD in Australia
2. To promote awareness of ESD and DESD in Australia

3. To promote innovative practice in ESD in formal, non-formal and informal learning situations
4. To equip educators with the competence to include sustainability issues in their work
5. To ensure that adequate and appropriate resources and materials for ESD are available to, and accessible by, learners in all education sectors and levels
6. To promote monitoring, evaluation and research on ESD and DESD activities
7. To strengthen cooperation on ESD at all levels across State/Territory borders
8. To encourage Australian participation in international DESD activities, especially in Asia and the Pacific

Priorities

1. To develop a national strategy and action plan for the decade to guide stakeholders and catalyse change across Australia in a united approach to actions for the decade.
2. To develop a strongly inclusive partnership network for the decade to facilitate the coming together of a variety of stakeholders.
3. To establish an assistance program for all stakeholders in order that they can develop their own objectives, outcomes and indicators within the implementation framework set by UNESCO and local contexts.
4. To develop a framework for monitoring, reporting and evaluating DESD in Australia.
5. To develop and implement a communications plan to accompany DESD activities and promulgate the significance of the decade and achievements in change.
6. To commence work with teacher/educator employers, curriculum authorities, study boards and education and training departments in state and federal systems to identify standards, promote recognition of qualifications in environmental education, and develop modules and materials to advance EfSD.
7. To work with teacher training institutes and institutions that teaches sustainability to encourage EfSD in their training courses. Higher education institutions should also be encouraged to include sustainability as a core component of all programs.
8. To engage youth and young professionals in education and action for sustainability. This should aim at equipping young people with the skills knowledge and values to catalyse and inspire change.

2. KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All sectors of society, not just formal education, are stakeholders in ESD and have important roles to play in the DESD. Government, business and industry, institutions and community groups at national, state/territory and local/regional levels have complementary roles and responsibilities. The nature of the activities each stakeholder group – and individual members of such groups - undertakes will be a reflection of their capacity and influence. The important thing is that all relevant organisations take responsibility for contributing in appropriate ways to the goal and objectives of the DESD.

Stakeholder Group	Examples of Responsibilities
National Government Departments and Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy-making and framework-setting • promoting public consultation and involvement • encouraging national partnerships and coordination • national public campaigns • embedding and operationalising ESD in educational systems • monitoring and evaluation • reporting to the UN
Local and State/Territory Government Departments and Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy-making and framework-setting • promoting public consultation and involvement • encouraging local, regional and State/Territory partnerships and coordination • national public campaigns • embedding and operationalising ESD in educational systems • monitoring and evaluation • reporting to national government

Civil Society - NGOs and Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public awareness-raising, advocacy, campaigns and lobbying • consultancy and input into policy formulation • delivering ESD, primarily in non-formal settings • mediation between government and people
Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workplace training for sustainability • encourage integration of sustainability into TAFE and other vocational programmes • consultancy and input into policy formulation • partnerships in ESD with government, civil society and educational systems, institutions, projects, etc. • development and sharing of practices of sustainable production and consumption
Educational Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of ESD policy and plans • professional development of staff • effective sustainability operational / management practices • collaboration with other institutions • community education and outreach • monitoring, evaluation and research
Professional Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support members through professional learning, networks, publications and resources to integrate sustainability into their programmes • collaboration with other associations, government, civil society and educational systems, institutions, projects, etc. • advocacy, consultation and input into policy formulation • community education and outreach • monitoring, evaluation and research
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote public awareness and understanding of sustainability issues • community education and outreach • collaboration with government, civil society and educational systems to promote DESD activities and outcomes
Individuals and Households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in life-long learning for sustainability • practice lifestyle choices that reflect social, economic and environmental sustainability • support DESD activities in the local community

3. STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The DESD provides opportunities for re-thinking the way we learn and work together. Some participants in the National Symposium recognised and articulated that ESD provides a common framework and language that facilitates creating new collaborations as well as rekindling old partnerships to meet the challenges of sustainability. The DESD provides positive opportunities to learn and work together in new ways in collaboration with diverse sectors that traditionally may not have been aligned.

The following suggested strategies and activities are examples of the range of initiatives possible. Many could meet multiple objectives rather than the one nominated whilst others are dependant upon sectorial contexts and are more appropriate for different systemic levels. .

Objectives	Possible Strategies and Activities
1. To clarify a common vision for ESD and DESD in Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct forums (eg face-to-face; virtual/asynchronous) to identify and develop a comprehensive framework for ESD principles that includes common concepts, values, principles of ESD and to guide DESD activities • a snapshot of what is happening to identify gaps/opportunities (research) to

	re-orient education programs towards ESD
2. To promote awareness of ESD and DESD in Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> incentives (financial and other) for various sectors/groups to take up the concept of ESD and contribute to the DESD engage the Australian community with all the pillars of ESD (ecological, economic, socio-cultural, political) and the associated principles (eg ecological integrity; cultural diversity and harmony, peace, sustainable lifestyles, good governance) use of media to assist in communicating and promoting DESD to the Australian community
3. To promote innovative practice in ESD in formal, non-formal and informal learning situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> showcase innovative programs across diverse sectors of society and make them accessible to others to share and learn from through sharing of good practice identify and facilitate complex understandings and skills amongst ESD practitioners to further their work schools provide the learning focus for the local community to engage with sustainability during the DESD celebrate good practice and showcase these practices within a sector and beyond eg through conferences, forums, seminars, publications, networks, website portal have annual events similar to national/international World Environment Day eg Sustainability Week/Festival to provide annual national focus for learning, promoting the ESD, and giving practical and provide forum for sharing real life ESD case studies in local communities
4. To equip educators with the competence to include sustainability issues in their work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of Standards for Sustainability for teachers development of multi-faceted approaches to combine educational initiatives with policy/economic/and other related initiatives embedding ESD into curriculum and assesment within the tertiary sector develop ESD capacity of tertiary sector to engage and mobilise communities to engage with sustainability identify, utilise and support community leaders to create 'community nodes' at local levels that stimulates debates/learning/working/living for sustainability ie to make connections at local level of how the community connects with sustainability support opportunities that develop effective mentoring programs within diverse sectors to assist ESD practitioners to improve their practices in their workplace; this could include mentoring across different workplaces
5. To ensure that adequate and appropriate resources and materials for ESD are available to, and accessible by, learners in all education sectors and levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop and maintain a national website portal to disseminate information on activities and resources and includes appropriate international examples and opportunities indigenous and multicultural perspectives are incorporated appropriately into developed ESD resources resources are developed that are sectorial specific and incorporate the wider implications of ESD (ie not only ecological pillar) identify and encourage the development of resources and materials that support engagement of groups under-represented in participating in sustainability and ESD engagement of relevant national professional associations (and their state/territory chapters) within sectors to assist in developing resources and providing ESD professional learning for practitioners provision for short and long term inservice professional learning opportunities for inservice teachers to support their teaching for sustainability to support the identified ESD champion/s with the workplace to share their experience and expertise with peers to widen the effect of ESD across diverse sectors of society
6. To promote monitoring, evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor the engagement of diverse community groups with ESD and DESD eg relevant professional associations working with community groups to

and research on ESD and DESD activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> build capacity for engaging with ESD monitor the level of integrated, holistic approaches that are used to make connections between strategies/activities and the pillars and principles of ESD during the DESD begin longitudinal research studies that monitor effects of media/learning programs upon societal behaviour changes monitor the effects on the community of ESD outreach programs each level of coordination (refer to Section 4 of this Report) has a responsibility to identify appropriate and diverse plans for monitoring & evaluating the impacts of activities/strategies/resources and report this to the Australian government and community use of vision and framework for ESD principles (refer to objective 1) to audit ESD and DESD activities national research program that focuses on monitoring & evaluation during the DESD to identify gaps and needs to inform future policy and strategies of DESD activities
7. To strengthen cooperation on ESD at all levels across State/Territory borders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formation of partnerships which are underpinned by ESD principles use of relevant professional associations to assist in development of partnerships with government create opportunities for ongoing communication between different systemic levels and strategies/activities to enhance learning and effectiveness of programs support opportunities for relationship-building between institutional partnerships as sustainability is central to how we interact with each other, our socio-cultural/ political systems and the environment encourage whole of government approach to engage in holistic DESD programs
8. To encourage Australian participation in international DESD activities, especially in Asia and the Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> draw upon the NZ experience to support development of professional learning opportunities for ESD practitioners (eg inservice teachers) a national partnership or alliance is formed to strategically coordinate the DESD (see Section 4 of this Report) to include membership and liaison with appropriate international representatives to share and learn from support institutions that sign relevant sustainability international agreements to implement strategies (eg the Talloires Declaration for the university sector)

4. COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES ACROSS LOCAL/REGIONAL, STATE/TERRITORY AND NATIONAL LEVELS

Australia is a large country with communities spread across large distances. Coordination is therefore often difficult. This situation is affected by factors such as the diversified structure of the Australian education system (across formal and non-formal sectors, primary, secondary and tertiary levels, public, catholic and independent systems, etc.) and the division of responsibilities for education and sustainable development across multiple portfolios and levels of government (national, state and local).

As a result, it is vital that processes that facilitate national, state/territory and local/regional coordination through partnerships and alliances be established to help ensure that DESD activities are coordinated into a holistic program. It is recommended that the National Framework for ESD in Australia reflects three systemic levels of operation: local; state/territory/regional; national. Possible activities to facilitate coordination are outlined below:

At the Local/Regional Level

1. Develop a collaborative process to coordinate the DESD to bring all stakeholders together to plan and coordinate a collaborative approach

- This should be initiated and resources by local authorities in partnership with interested community, business and educational organisations. A wide range of participants from government, school education, further and higher education, business and industry, and civil society groups should be involved. Its roles should include:
 - Provide a forum for engagement in the DESD by interested organisations
 - Advocacy, promotion and vision building for the DESD
 - Advice to state/territory governments on local/regional DESD priorities
 - Capacity building in ESD for local organisations
 - Planning and implementation of local/regional DESD activities
 - Networking and support for organisations undertaking DESD activities
 - Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

At the State/Territory/Regional Level

2. Develop a collaborative process to coordinate the DESD to bring all stakeholders together to plan and coordinate a collaborative approach

- This should be initiated and resources by state/territory governments in partnership with interested community, business and educational organisations.
- A wide range of participants from government, school education, further and higher education, business and industry, and civil society groups should be involved. Its roles should include:
 - Provide a forum for organisations interested in DESD
 - Advocacy, promotion and vision building for the DESD
 - Advice to state/territory governments and the national partnership/alliance on DESD priorities
 - Coordination of strategic DESD activities in state/territory
 - Networking and support for organisations undertaking DESD activities
 - Monitoring, evaluation and reporting
- The partnership should be funded by the state/territory governments, community, business and educational organisations and other stakeholders

At the National Level

3. Develop a national process to coordinate the DESD to bring all stakeholders together to plan and coordinate a collaborative approach

- This should be initiated by DEH as the lead agency for DESD in Australia and the National Commission for UNESCO.
- A wide range of participants from government, school education, further and higher education, business and industry, and civil society groups should be involved.
- Its roles should include:
 - Advocacy, promotion and vision building for the DESD
 - Advice to Australian government and National Commission for UNESCO on DESD priorities in Australia
 - Coordination of strategic DESD activities in Australia
 - Support national monitoring, evaluation and reporting
 - Liaison with appropriate international representatives to provide and inform international perspectives of the DESD
- The partnership should be funded by the Australian government, the National Commission for UNESCO, community, business and educational organisations and other stakeholders.

5. MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Reporting

As a member of the United Nations, Australia will be invited to report on DESD activities and outcomes across the 2005-2014 period of the Decade. This means that effective processes of monitoring and reporting from local/regional and state/territory levels of activity to the Australian government need to be in place.

The National Environmental Education Network (NEEN) provides a forum for this for state/territory activities, and could also play a major role in cases study evaluations of activities in each state/territory. However, it may be difficult for NEEN members to monitor activities outside environmental sustainability or conducted by the many local/regional groups who may engage with the DESD.

As a result, it is recommended that the Australian National Commission for UNESCO and the Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage establish a system for self-reporting of DESD activities. This should be web-based and invite activity coordinators to report on such factors as;

- Activity title
- Activity type (seminar, workshop, publication, etc.)
- Host organisation (and type)
- Major audience types
- Number of participants
- Contact person details
- Etc.

Such data can be collated and analysed for international reporting purposes, together with data on outcomes and impacts that emerge from evaluation activities against agreed indicators.

Evaluation

The process of evaluation for the wide range of stakeholders and potential activities in the DESD poses a number of difficulties, not the least of which is selecting indicators that distinguish between the outputs, outcomes and impacts of DESD activities.

This issue is not uncommon in evaluation, especially when long-lasting behavioural and system-level changes are important. However, it is important that a distinction is made between outputs, outcomes and impacts of education. To this end, the following definitions are recommended:

- **Outputs** are the material products of an activity or programme. They normally do not have value in and of themselves but rather as tools for, or contributions to, the achievement of outcomes and impacts.
- **Outcomes** are the achievements or changes brought about by an activity or programme that, although potentially short-term, provide knowledge, values and skills, as well as a supportive context, for longer-term cumulative effects or impacts.
- **Impacts** are the longer-term cumulative effects of an activity or programme and embody lasting changes. These include both (i) positive personal and group changes in the ways in which people think and their life and work practices, and (ii) improvements in the sustainability status of an area or resource.

Educational outcomes are both people and system-focused, and support the ability of individuals and communities to analyse sustainability issues, to envision and evaluate alternative solutions and scenarios, to make action plans, and to work co-operatively with others to implement them effectively. This means that educational outcomes are rooted in present issues and contexts, but are also future oriented – towards a time

when people actually act on their plans and these actions have had a chance to yield positive impacts on the sustainability status of an area or resource.

This means that timing is an important consideration for an evaluation or audit. As a general rule, outputs and some outcomes can be monitored and assessed in the short term. Other outcomes and most impacts can only be achieved in the medium to long term (and require regular reinforcement over time) and thus can only be evaluated in the medium to long term. This has implications for identifying the criteria and indicators used to identify the effectiveness of a program.

While outputs provide appropriate base data for monitoring, it is important that desired long-term outcomes and impacts, and appropriate indicators be identified for the DESD in Australia. Appropriate outcomes and impacts for the objectives of the DESD in Australia may include:

Objective	Outcome	Impact
To clarify a common vision for ESD and DESD in Australia	An agreed conception of the nature, scope and purposes of ESD across stakeholder groups	Increasing integration of ESD into education and sustainable development activities across all sectors
To promote awareness of ESD and DESD in Australia	An increasing level of awareness of ESD and DESD in the Australian community across the DESD	ESD is taken into account by policy developers in education and sustainable development planning at all levels
To promote innovative practice in ESD in formal, non-formal and informal learning situations	ESD and DESD activities reflect learner-centred and participatory approaches	Rising levels of personal, corporate and community adherence to sustainability principles in daily activities
To equip educators with the competence to include sustainability issues in their work	An increasing level of ability among Australian educators and sustainable development practitioners to include sustainability issues in their work	Rising understanding of, and commitment to, sustainability across the community
To ensure that adequate and appropriate resources and materials for ESD are available to, and accessible by, learners in all education sectors and levels	An increasing level of adequate and appropriate resources and materials for ESD are available to, and accessible by, learners in all education sectors and levels	Educators at all levels and all sectors are using appropriate resources and materials for ESD and this is reflected in rising understanding of, and commitment to, sustainability across the community
To promote monitoring, evaluation and research on ESD and DESD activities	All DESD activities are reported to appropriate bodies and evaluation strategies in place and understood by practitioners	Feedback from evaluation informs and enhances ESD policies, programmes and activities
To strengthen cooperation on ESD at all levels across State/Territory borders	An increasing level of cooperation on ESD at all levels across State/Territory borders	Reduced levels of duplication of activities and increased levels of collaborative activities across State/Territory borders
To encourage Australian participation in international	An increasing level of Australian participation in international	Australia recognised regionally and internationally as a 'best

DESD activities, especially in Asia and the Pacific	DESD activities, especially in Asia and the Pacific	case' example of ESD.
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Organisations undertaking DESD activities should identify the objectives, outcomes and impacts most relevant to their interests, strategic plans and spheres/scales of operation and then identify appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative indicators to gauge their quality, success and impacts – with the resulting information integrating into cycles of continuous programme improvement.