



'Resource Development to Support the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative, Victoria'

***Victorian Association for Environmental Education (VAEE)
CERES Community Environment Park
La Trobe University
National Centre for Sustainability, Swinburne University***

1. Project Outline

The Department of Education has stated the purpose of the project is to develop three distinct, but linked resources:

- a) A targeted training program for community and business organisations that will empower them to be state-wide facilitators for the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative in Victorian Schools.
- b) A specific training program for pre-service teachers, aligned with the above program, that will ensure ongoing promotion and support for the next generation of teachers in Victorian Schools
- c) Checklist for Schools about the effectiveness of their education for a sustainable environment to use as part of their school plan review process every four years

2. Scope of Project

The overall outcome of this project will be to provide state-level liaison, facilitation and coordination for educators and practitioners, to encourage partnerships for collaborative, coordinated, integrated approaches in environmental sustainability in schools.

The partners will work together and with the sector to develop the following three resources:

1. A training program specifically for community and business organisation together with Government and Statutory body agencies to become state-wide facilitators for AuSSI, Vic. The training includes how to use Koori resources as a facilitator for AuSSI, Vic;
2. A pre-service teacher AuSSI, Vic program, informing participants about AuSSI Vic facilitators and AuSSI, Vic Program;
3. A checklist which schools can use as part of their school plan review process to identify and monitor their activities in education for sustainable environment.

The Principles of Learning and Teaching (POLT), Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELs), Curriculum Planning Guidelines, Guide Beside, AuSSI Vic core and module units will constitute the foundation for the development of the materials.

An integrated process of data gathering, materials development and consultation has been devised to facilitate the development of the three resources.

At present the environmental sustainability education sector provides the following types of activity in Victorian schools:

- Environmental Sustainability Professional Learning for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Teachers;
- VELs based development programs using sustainability as a focus in Primary and Secondary schools;
- VCE program development;
- Environmental Educators / program co-ordinators working in schools (incursion);
- Environmental Educators / program co-ordinators working with schools (excursion);
- Environmental Educators specialising in areas of water, waste, biodiversity/landcare, energy and transport;
- Whole school environment management planning (SEMP) through the AuSSI Vic and local government programs;
- Resource management and infrastructure development;
- Teacher/educator professional networks;
- Direct assistance to school development;
- Co-ordination of provider programs;
- Advisory and advocacy services;
- Representation on State and National EE bodies/associations;
- Conferences, seminars and workshops;
- IE Cluster Co-ordinators working with groups of schools;
- Site and field study centre programs.

Considerable work is being carried out by a range of service providers from State Government, Local Government, Non-Government Organisations and private businesses in the development and

delivery of environmental sustainability programs which are available to support schools and communities across Victoria. As issues of climate change and water shortages become critical, support, energy and convergence is set to increase. This growth of the sector and responding opportunities needs to be managed and co-ordinated so that it:

- adds value to the work that is being done at government, service provider and school level;
- is compatible with existing programs and avoids duplication with other successful programs;
- is based on contemporary best practice with an emphasis on transformative processes;
- is relevant to national and state targeted initiatives e.g. Our Environment Our Future, the National Action Plan - Educating for a Sustainable Future and Flagship Strategy One.

The AuSSI, Vic Resource Development project will play a vital role in the management and co-ordination of existing service delivery, and future growth of such, in schools by:

- building capacity and value to the current position and programs;
- identifying gaps in service provision and the needs of schools, teachers, students as learners and school communities;
- identifying, engaging and disseminating latest research and pedagogy;
- promoting and demonstrating Best Practice and Communities of Practice;
- promoting, supporting and developing Metropolitan and Regional responsiveness;
- building in other aspects of sustainability to increase entry points for non environmental sustainability oriented teachers.

The scope of the project will be identified in the preliminary advisory committee, project partner and working party meetings in January 2007. However at this stage, it is possible to outline that the project will:

- Be state wide. The consultation focus groups will be held in both metro Melbourne and regional Victoria;
- Reflect good professional learning practice, involvement of participation, their needs and existing expertise and current Curriculum Planning Guidelines. It will also cater for the difference levels of understanding of AuSSI, Vic;
- Include a wide range of partners from the following sections of the sector to ensure full representation: water, energy, waste, biodiversity, local government, indigenous, in-service teachers, tertiary and community. This will be facilitated through the consultation focus groups;
- Hold a maximum of 6 four hour sessions that will include an introduction to AuSSI, Vic, and focus on the provision of training, transfer to pre-service package and school indicators;
- Organise the consultation focus groups so that they concentrate on the needs, deliverables and benchmarks and will focus on participants particular area of expertise (community, water for example);
- Facilitate the consultation focus groups so that they create a collective agreement and shared vision for AuSSI, Vic;

- Build on work that has already been undertaken. For example, the checklist for schools has already been scoped at a national level, opportunities for stakeholder review and modification will be undertaken;
- Outline the links and involvement in the pre-service package development. Two half days sessions need to be held with Education Faculties of Victorian Universities to get full involvement and commitment to this process;
- Create a set of agreed values and understanding surrounding Environmental Management in the context of AuSSI Vic.
- Look to scope out the potential future development of the training packages.

3. Project Approach, Structure and Plan

Collaboration & Participation

VAEE and partners has a commitment to building a community of sustainability facilitators. Collaboration and participation are therefore at the fore front of our approach. The project team structure and involvement of others in the sector has been developed to ensure maximum input from the widest range of organisations, stakeholders and educators in the time frame provided.

The project has been developed with four levels of activity. Each level has a different role within the project. The level of involvement of the organisations and individuals will vary accordingly. The project team will take responsibility for management, facilitation and production of the three components of the project as follows:

Project Activity	Those involved	Role
Advisory Committee	DoE, DSE, SV, DEH and Project Partners	To steer the project as a whole and advice the project partners.
Project Partners	VAEE, CERES, La Trobe, NCS Swinburne	To run the project and develop the resources outlined
Working Party Two working groups: 1. Facilitator Program 2. Pre-service Program	1. Facilitator Program Swinburne Uni & CERES: Education specialists incl EPA, Shire of Yarra Ranges, Victoria University, Primary Teacher, Secondary Teacher, Program providers that together cover the spectrum of topics in AuSSI. 2. Pre-service Program La Trobe Uni & CERES: DoE, Education faculties of RMIT University, Deakin University, Melbourne University, Monash University & ACU, CPTAV.	To help scope the initial stages of the specified program, identify opportunities and challenges and contribute considerably to its content. Critical friends for the project partners.
Consultation Focus Groups	Organisations who have vast experience in delivery of education programs in schools and Pre service teachers.	To test bed the draft programs and provide feedback on both content and structure

Proposed Training Resource & Training Program Outline

The duration of the each of the training programs and the content of the associated resources will be determined by a comprehensive coverage of the issues related to facilitation implementation of AuSSI, Vic including:

Whole of School Approach

The AuSSI, Vic framework and its consequent Victorian framework is by its very nature a whole of school approach. The current Victorian framework adheres strongly to the principles of the National Action Plan and has been developed over the post pilot period to be in direct alignment with the principles of Flagship Strategy 1 which include:

- Development of whole school action planning (SEMP);
- Students as the centre of learning;
- Resources conservation and management
- Development of school and school grounds a learning opportunity;
- Collection of baseline data sets;
- Measuring the impact of actions & schools on the environment;
- Creating networks, partnerships and communities of practice;
- Promoting good social and environmental, governance;

and specifically:

- Teaching and learning as a focus
- Curriculum organisation
- Curriculum development and consistency with essential learnings;
- Community engagement and participation;
- School organisational and logistical management;
- Principles of learning and teaching;
- The development and capacity of knowledge bank;
- Engagement of students through student action teams.

Following recommendations from the evaluation of the pilot phase program the project will create a package that is applicable to both the primary and secondary sector.

- Whole of Government Approach

The project and its processes will reflect the whole of government approach by adhering to the principles of the NEES/National Action Plan - Educating for a Sustainable Future (DEH), Learning to Live Sustainably (DSE) and The Way Forward (DET) all of which are generic, adapted and supportive of each other.

Package development will reflect:

- Adopting the whole of school approach and school ethos;
- Attending to effective resource management;
- Developing networks and multi agency support to schools;
- Developing strong environmental and school governance;
- Social participation and engagement;
- Embedding quick wins for teachers, students and school communities;
- and using the Way Forward as a blueprint for development of the package

In particular reflecting Our Environment Our future strategy by:

- Embedding families and communities as essential elements of AuSSI Vic;
- Engage a statewide and integrated support and action strategy for schools and their communities;
- Empower schools and their communities to build, develop and monitor; comprehensive long term education programs for sustainability;
- Employ key success strategies and factors including case studies;
- Underpinning whole school learning action and culture change;
- Creating strong flow on to parents and wider community;
- Increase student representiveness and capacity for addressing sustainability;
- Ensuring a number a breadth of entry points for schools, teachers, students and communities;
- Adhering to the key elements:
 - maintaining and restoring natural assets;
 - using resources more efficiently, and
 - reducing everyday environmental impacts.

These elements will be embedded throughout the three components of the package.

- Transformative Learning Approach

Following the work undertaken by VAAE and Victorian University in the development of The Guide Beside (a DSE initiated and funded project currently at Phase 2 of a three phase program) the processes used in the developing of the project material will be governed by principles as set out in the Guide Beside and will ensure that the following principles of transformative learning are incorporated:

- Reflective practice
- Valuing and testing prior experience
- Collaboration
- High Level Learning
- Valuing prior knowledge and diverse ways of knowing
- Valuing both content and process
- Learning through doing

Given the stakeholder collaboration and transformative approach to the development of the three components of the training package will be identified and developed during the process.

Roles & Structure

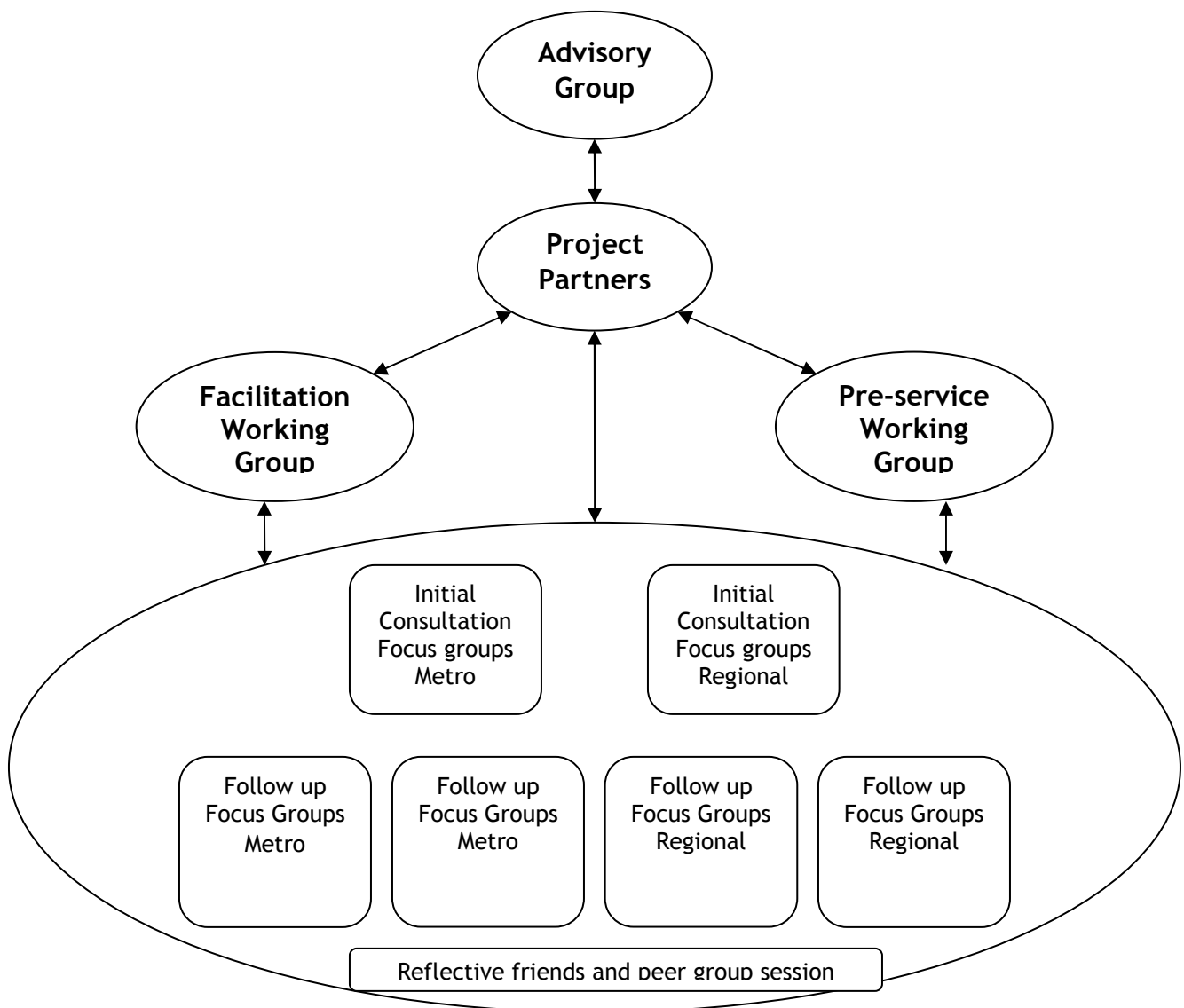
Due to the specific experience and distinct skills of the partner organisations, the role of each of them in this project is very clear. The organizations will have the follow main roles and responsibilities, but to ensure a collaborative approach will call on the involvement of other organisations in the development of their area of work.

- VAAE will manage the project and use its networks to promote the project to ensure open involvement of the sector at each developmental stage.
- NCS Swinburne will frame up the content of the targeted facilitation training program for community and business organizations and will be supported by CERES. NCS Swinburne will:

- La Trobe University (Education Faculty) will lead the framing of the content of the pre-service element of the project and will work with CERES and other education faculties of Melbourne based and regional universities to shape the final pre-service training package.
- CERES Community Environment Park will lead the development of the checklist for schools and oversee and collate the three components of the project.

Project Team Structure

The project team and personnel involved in the project have been drawn together based on their experience and extensive skills across the various sectors of environmental sustainability education. The proposed project structure is outlined below.



The project has been split into five distinct phases:

Scoping & Planning Phase

Initial project partner meeting and working group meetings will be held early January to examine the project criteria, existing materials and to develop and map the tasks for each package component. The project plan and communication strategy will be agreed by the project team and this will form the basis of the first report to the advisory committee.

These meetings will also map out the consultation process and construct a list of potential representatives from the sector to take part in the consultation focus groups. The working parties in particular will play a strong role during this process and will be responsible for the facilitation of the scoping sessions. This will include a review of the SSI Pilot program and its processes, the facilitator manual, the pilot evaluation and the AuSSI, Vic structure.

First Development Stage

The structure of each component will be developed in draft, with basic outline of content. The resources will be developed and managed by the partner organisations, in consultation with the Department of Education and Training (Target Initiatives Unit) and the Advisory Committee. This will help inform the content of the consultation focus group sessions that will be held throughout February. The project team and working groups will work with Victoria University to develop an interactive, engaging method to facilitate the involvement of stakeholders at the consultation focus groups. It is envisaged that the following task and consultation focus groups will create a stakeholder relationship with AuSSI, Vic through 'Communities of Practice'. It is envisioned that these groups will create their own selection criteria (based on communities of practice e.g. the water industry educators) and facilitate the session using Guide Beside principles and processes. The project team will act as an informant/advisory group rather than a facilitator of these sessions.

Consultation Phase

The partner organisations will use a collaborative approach in the development of the resources, looking to the environmental sustainability education sector for input and feedback into their content. A number of 4 hour forums will be developed to allow representatives from the sector to reflect on the current material and inform the development of the program packages. Whilst the project partners recognise this is a big task we believe it is essential to gain a wider ownership of AuSSI, Vic and to ensure the training packages better reflect the charters of all service providers from the sector.

The consultation focus groups focus on the three resources and packages that are being developed and each will identify the training need, potential resources for the packages (See Proposed Training Resource & Training Program Outline for details):

- Water
- Energy
- Biodiversity
- Waste
- Local government
- Indigenous
- Community
- Tertiary sector

- In service graduate and experienced teachers

These focus groups will also have the opportunity to refine and detail the acknowledgment / accreditation components of the AuSSI, Vic structure and outline the best process applicable for their sector for training and collaboration.

All service providers, agencies and interested practitioners will be invited to attend and these sessions will be facilitated by key personnel from the sustainability/environment area.

This process will also identify a number of individuals who will be invited to act as reflective friends for the remainder of the project. This is seen as both a critical process of Transformative Learning but also as a vital tool in developing a useable and quality product.

Developments of the individual packages will also be constantly monitored and evaluated by the project team and working parties.

Proposed Consultation Forums:

The consultation forums will take place during 26th February - 9th March 2007. A total of 6 will be run: 4 in Melbourne, 2 in Regional Victoria.

All of the forums will enable a review of the training packages as a whole. However, the Melbourne based forums will have an option to get involved in a specific focus. This will be managed by splitting the consultation forums into two:

- General Consultation - Review of AuSSI Vic resources
- Focus Consultation - Review of AuSSI Vic resources in terms of:
 - Local Government and links to the community
 - Biodiversity and Landcare
 - Water, Energy, Waste
 - Formal Education

Week 1: Melbourne 1 26th Feb 9 -1
 Melbourne 2 28th Feb 9 - 1
 Regional Bendigo 2nd March 10 - 2

Week 2: Melbourne 3 6th March 9-1
 Melbourne 4 7th March 1 - 4
 Regional Geelong 9th March 10 - 2

Second Development (Consolidation) Phase

Following the consultation focus groups the project team will be responsible for reviewing and managing the changes to the three components of the project. This second draft document will be reviewed by the relevant working groups and at a reflective friend peer review evening session. CERES will play a pivotal role in this final stage in terms of linking, harmonising and finalising the three resources.

Collating and Finishing (Completion) Phase

Final amendments will be made to the three components. VAEE will organise external editing and proofing of the documents before submission to the Department of Education.

4. Links to other initiatives and developments

The project structure and approach has been developed to ensure that it takes into full consideration other projects, developments and initiatives that are currently ongoing and will affect the content of the resources being developed. The project will:

- Manage and proactively communicate with stakeholder to bring buy in and avoid duplication of effort;
- Develop the resources inline with:
 - Sustainable Schools Pilot Project (objectives and evaluations of) facilitation manual and optional module of that program;
 - other relevant PD training programs (Principles of Guide Beside, Professional Teaching Associations);
 - Australian Government Quality Teacher Training Program;
 - the Blueprint for Victorian Schools;
 - the administrative guidelines for Education for a Sustainable Environment.
- Build on the momentum created through the Sustainable Roundtable. During this process a school group was formed which identified five smart ways, one of which was for schools and local businesses/local governments set up partnerships to work together to produce innovative solutions for environmental problems in schools and their communities;
- Considers the facilities element of schools (Building Futures).

Partner Contact Details

Teresa Day
Victorian Association for Environmental Education
Main contact.

Linda Condon
NCS Swinburne
Swinburne University of Technology
Phone: (03) 9214 5997
Fax: (03) 9214 5967
Email: LCondon@groupwise.swin.edu.au
Mail: PO Box 218 Hawthorn Vic 3122
Web: www.ncsustainability.com.au

Glenn Davidson
CERES
Phone: (03) 9380 1556
Fax: (03) 9387 4472
Mob: 0418 590 140
Email: glenn@ceres.org.au
Mail: 8 Lee Street, Brunswick East, VIC 3057
Web: www.ceres.org.au

Peter Cox

School of Education
La Trobe University
Phone: (3) 5444 7907
Fax: (3) 5444 7800
Email: p.cox@latrobe.edu.au
Mail: PO Box 199 Bendigo Victoria 3552 AUSTRALIA
Web: www.La Trobe.edu.au/edu/