



*The Guide Beside**

Planning & Designing Participant-based Professional Learning

Introduction and Report on Stage 1

An outcome of the Learning to Live Sustainably Strategy
of the Department of Sustainability and Environment,
Victoria



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The material in this report is an outcome of the Professional Development for Sustainability Educators Project: Stage 1:Laying the Foundations and Piloting Practical Outcomes.

The outcomes of the project have reframed standard approaches to professional development, so that facilitators of environmental sustainability are led to ask 'What is most useful for me?' rather than following standardised, one-size-fits-all professional development materials.

A key reason for taking this new approach is that facilitation of environmental sustainability clearly needs to move beyond telling people what it is they need to do and why, to an approach that engages with people around their circumstances, to achieve learning and change. Many people now refer to this as the 'transformative' approach, which contrasts with what was dominated by a more 'transmissive' approach. We have called this new approach 'The Guide Beside'.

How this new approach works can be gained by reading the background to *The Guide Beside* contained in this booklet, and by scanning through the detailed Modules that have arisen out of the new approach. *The booklet is primarily designed as an introduction to The Guide Beside for sustainability facilitators, but also serves as a report on Stage 1 of the ongoing professional development project.*

The **Goals** of the project are listed on the **back cover** of this booklet.

Recommendations flowing from the project are listed on the **back inside cover**.

Key outcomes of the project are as follows:

- There is broad agreement across Victoria amongst experienced sustainability facilitators working in a variety of sectors and levels, as to what constitutes effective facilitation for learning and change
- This agreement has resulted in the formulation of a set of principles for effective sustainability facilitation.
- In formulating the principles, and reflecting on their implementation, a network of practitioners has been built, who have a shared a focus for developing, implementing and improving professional learning for effective sustainability facilitation
- A key component of effective sustainability facilitation is the process of transformative learning and the need to re-balance processes that promote learning and change, across a 'bandwidth' extending from 'educating', to 'enabling' and further to 'exploring'; the central importance of transformative approaches are widely supported at the state, national and international levels
- The frameworks and processes for transformative learning and change, and how to utilise these to build effective sustainability programs are not well understood across the spectrum of sustainability facilitators – this will form a key component of professional learning
- The processes used in professional learning to enhance facilitators' capabilities in using transformative approaches need to be consistent with the nature of what is being learnt – using essentially transmissive (eg written or lock-step) approaches to transformative-style PL may result in learning about transformative processes, but not necessarily how to be effective in using these processes. People need to *use and be a part of* transformative approaches for deep transformation to occur.
- There is a need to devise and support practical, interactive and reflective learning situations for sustainability facilitators; to maximise the likelihood of learning to facilitate transformative change processes, rather than just learning about how to do these.
- Likewise there is a need to devise and support practical, reflective learning for the planning, organisation and evaluation of integrated sustainability programs and projects.
- Transformation occurs most effectively when there is mutual learning occurring at both the level of facilitator and participant

The Guide Beside*: Materials to Assist You to Plan & Design Participant-based Professional Learning

*"People don't resist change, they resist **being** changed"*

from The Fifth Discipline, Peter Senge.

SOME INITIAL THOUGHTS

What do you prefer to read first?

There are many ways to start reading *The Guide Beside*.

You might like to begin with the *background* section that follows straight on from these introductory remarks, which gives you an explanation as to how the project arose, what we aimed to achieve in this first stage of a longer term project, and who was involved.

Or you may want to come back to this, after you have read the next section, which is about some of the *key frameworks, processes, paradigms and principles* that we were able to identify through the project. This section includes a discussion of the various roles of the sustainability facilitator.

Alternatively, you may want to start at *the practical end* of the Guide Beside, by either looking at the introductory section to *effective facilitation, setting goals, planning and evaluation*, or by starting directly with one of *the six modules*, which consist of three generic modules: (Processes; Evaluation; and Strategy & Organisation) as well as three context specific modules (Business & Training; Municipal Councils & Agencies; and School, Community & Family Intersections). A more detailed explanation of how the Guide Beside is organised can be found at the end of this introductory section.

Whatever your entry point to *The Guide Beside*, you will find that each section relates in some significant ways to ideas, frameworks and/or practical hints in other sections. We hope that the signposts we have included will help you to find your way around.

BACKGROUND

Where to begin? A fresh approach to professional learning

At the start, the purpose of this project has been deceptively clear: We have been about identifying and clarifying ways to facilitate and encourage our fellow facilitators to work more effectively for better sustainability outcomes.

From the outset we were aware that a lot of great material already exists that can help in this endeavour. The project has confirmed and extended our appreciation of what is around. However, what is available in one sector or program is not widely known in others. Whatever the professional learning outcomes were to be, they needed to ensure that manuals sitting on shelves in one sector were getting into the active hands of those who need it in another.

Most of this existing material is targeted towards specific audiences, and mostly it tends to be prescriptive in nature: essentially 'how to do it' manuals, toolboxes and descriptions that are specific to sectors or even more narrow project groupings. And yet, embedded within these prescriptive and specific materials are ideas and approaches that, if appropriately adapted or modified, would be useful in many other contexts.

We also confirmed early on, following the lead of the Learning to Live Sustainably Draft Strategy, and its equivalents at national and international level, that effective learning and

¹ *Thanks to Vox Bandicoot Inc. for this excellent encapsulation

change for sustainability needs to be based on approaches that are adaptive, participant-based and reflective ('transformative'). The wider community of practitioners has confirmed this in numerous ways – affirmation for this approach across sectors and programs is beyond dispute. The question is how to most effectively achieve it. The need for professional learning that supports and develops this approach is in direct contrast to much of the material already in existence, however well meaning these may be, and however useful their frameworks and suggestions for skills development, framing and planning are.

If we were to avoid being repetitive, and to frame professional learning in ways that cater for a wide range of interests (constantly shifting) and founded on participant-based, transformative processes, we were going to need to do things differently, from the start, and all the way through. And that is what we did.

The professional learning material before you has been produced in ways that stay true to the transformative processes we are trying to evoke in others. Hopefully we have been able to pull together the best explanations outlining the processes needed for effective learning and change, and have combined this with the views of experienced practitioners. At the same time, we have tried to frame this material, not as a set of knowledge and activities to be faithfully followed or 'downloaded', or even as a best practice manual, but as a compendium of resources and wisdom for you to draw on, modify, adapt, change and transform, to enhance your own best practice.

The name we have given to the professional learning material hopefully conveys something of what we are wanting to achieve, in both the professional learning materials themselves, and the approach we want to encourage practitioners of sustainability learning and change to adopt: we call what we have produced The Guide Beside*.

This has been crystallized in a few words by Vox Bandicoot Inc.* in their Sustainability Street program:

"What type of sustainability learning and change practitioner are you? The Sage on Stage, or the Guide Beside?"

At best, you will find you are using The Guide Beside* as a prompt and resource to design and develop professional learning for your own network of sustainability facilitators (see Modules 4, 5 and 6). And perhaps to be used also in different ways by the champions and influencers who work with you, and who have picked up the sustainability challenge in some form, to help them understand how to be most effective and clear in what they do.

If the Guide Beside achieves nothing other than to help you to frame more clearly the questions you have about working and learning more effectively to do sustainability, then it will have achieved something significant. Or perhaps it will be a first few thoughts about frameworks and skills that you and your fellow practitioners are encouraged to explore, sparking off a chain of ideas that come from your circumstances and experiences, that in turn lead to a whole new learning and change framework or program.

Hopefully, in many cases, The Guide Beside* will do more as well, by providing frameworks, activities and content that you will find useful, or adaptable, as well as links to other resources and references, and pathways that connect one aspect of learning and change (e.g. goal setting) with another (e.g. evaluation).

With the Guide Beside* we put you in control of the professional learning. We know that you have the best on-ground wisdom, experience and support to design, organise and act upon professional learning in your own specific context.

So good luck on your learning and change journey. Go for it! And don't forget to stop occasionally, to smell the wildflowers and feel the breeze!

Colin Hocking, on behalf of the Guide Beside team, January 2006.

Acknowledgements: Who was involved in developing the Guide Beside

The Guide Beside is the outcome of Stage 1 of the Professional Development for Sustainability Educators funded by the State Government of Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment, as part of the Learning to Live Sustainably Strategy. Thanks in particular to Steve Malcolm for his enthusiasm, interest, support and advice at each important step of this project.

The project was organised through the Victorian Association for Environmental Education (VAEE), the peak body for environmental and sustainability learning in Victoria.

The project facilitation team consisted of:

Steve Ray & Teresa Day, VAEE
Colin Hocking, Victoria University

The module facilitators were drawn from a range of organisations across sectors. While each person or group was responsible for facilitating development of one of the modules, in reality the facilitators contributed valuable advice, insights and experience across the modules, and overall content, and the Guide Beside is a tribute to the way we were able to work as a team:

- Colin Hocking (Victoria University): Processes & Paradigms
- Gilbert Rochecoste (Village Well): Organisation & Strategy
- Brian Sharpley (BriTer Solutions): Evaluation
- Pat Armstrong & Eric Bottomley (Sustainable Schools): Schools, Communities & Families
- Linda Condon (National Centre for Sustainability, Swinburne University): Business & Training
- Harry Van Moorst: Municipal Councils & Agencies

In addition, many people contributed valuable ideas and practical suggestions through the forums and small group consultations that we conducted as part of Stage 1. You are too numerous to name individually here, but without your input the Guide Beside would be much less than it is. Your commitment to the notion of building a community of sustainability facilitators is equally appreciated, and we hope that the professional development program over the next decade will continue to support and include your efforts.

Finally, we have drawn liberally on the known body of written experience in drawing together the excellent material on learning and change for sustainability that constitutes a significant part of the Guide Beside, and we thank those who have been the leaders in putting this material together. It is our intention that, wherever possible, to provide recognition and attribution to those who have expertise, insights and practical experience to offer, and our reference to your work is hopefully both extensive and appropriate. However, often what is used in one place has arisen in another, and adapted or recycled for a particular purpose. So equally we hope that you will be magnanimous in allowing us to summarise your work, and point practitioners in your direction. If you feel that you require different acknowledgement to that already provided, or there is additional or more recent or appropriate material that we should be referring to, then we are keen to hear from you, via VAEE or DSE.

How the Project Arose & Focus for Stage 1

The Need: In April 2005, the Victorian State Government released its Environmental Sustainability Framework, entitled 'Our Environment, Our Future'. According to the framework:

"The Victorian Government has already introduced strategies to improve the sustainability of our rivers and reservoirs, forests and cities. Now we need to take the next step, which is to incorporate environmental sustainability principles into all the things we do." (pg 7)

This foreshadows a fundamental shift, from learning *about* the environment, towards life-long learning *for* sustainability (LFS) for everyone. Required for this transformation are changes in the way we approach learning to do sustainability, or more accurately the pedagogy of learning. The key aspects of this new pedagogy (approach) have been identified many times over, for example:

"The teaching and learning strategies promoted in EFS (education for sustainability) include [learner]-centred approaches that link strongly to participation because they involve [learner] choice, power sharing within the learning environment and exploration of relevant issues." Wilson-Hill 2003, pg 7, in Henderson & Tilbury 2004 *Whole school approaches to sustainability. An international review of sustainable schools programs.*, Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability (ARIES) .

This approach to learning has been termed 'transformative learning' and contrasts with 'transmissive learning'

[Education For Sustainability] differs from traditional approaches to [Environmental Education] in that it focuses sharply on more complex social issues, such as the links between environmental quality, human equality, human rights and peace and their underpinning politics. This requires citizens to have skills in critical enquiry and systematic thinking to explore the complexity and implications of sustainability. This new educational approach also requires a new pedagogy which sees learners develop skills and competencies for partnerships, participation and action.

"We need to recognise that we do not have the solutions for environmental and social problems. We all need to learn along the path to sustainable development and particularly how to manage in new ways in a participatory process."

Denise Hamu, Chair, IUCN
Commission on Education and
Communication.

A critical outcome of education for environmental sustainability, in addition to specific behaviour changes, is an ongoing capacity of citizens to effectively respond to future challenges. Successful sustainability education is depends so strongly on the learning that comes from active involvement in processes for change that definitions often include an objective or pre-condition of "opportunities for every citizen to become involved" or "must involve active participation".

These approaches have been encapsulated in the State Government Draft Strategy: "Learning to Live Sustainably: Victoria's approach to learning-based change for environmental sustainability" September 2005. The draft strategy recognises that Education & Behaviour Change (E&BC) for environmental sustainability will (among a range of directions and principle):

- **be for the whole community** - for people from all age groups, cultures and walks of life, in both personal and professional capacities and in all parts of their lives including home, work, formal education and public places;
- **embrace all the different ways in which people learn and change** – sometimes described as the "formal", "non-formal" and "informal" processes for learning;

- use an **interdisciplinary approach** with methods drawn from areas as diverse as psychology, communications, community development, formal education, marketing, community engagement, knowledge management and information technology, extension, organisational management and change management
- **build on the substantial work already done** in this field, including the **consensus on key success factors** for Sustainability Education established by sustainability educators;
- be **founded on successful existing programs**. Continuing development of these programs and cross-program collaboration will be a priority. Gaps, needs and opportunities will be identified and addressed, to achieve **greatly increased quality, scale and efficiency of delivery**;
- be based on a strong **commitment to best practice and continuous improvement** in learning for sustainability, **guided by effective research and evaluation**. A key input will be consideration of the impact and effectiveness of the range of activities undertaken to date under the umbrella of “Sustainability Education”;

Approach to Learning – a Pedagogical Base: According to the Learning To Live Sustainably Draft Strategy, learning for sustainability will need to include the following:

- high-level, transformative learning that addresses not only factual knowledge but people’s attitudes, values and action skills – this cannot be achieved simply by information transfer and depends on a rich range of learning experiences including engagement and reflection;
- active involvement and a sense of personal ownership and responsibility among all citizens – learning and action best happen together;
- a range of opportunities that enables each person and group to find their own specific actions for sustainability;
- experiences for each person and group that involve sustainability issues of real interest and importance to them and that have clear links to their day to day lives and actions;
- working together – involvement in collective as well as individual learning and action; developing a shared vision and goals and a cooperative, collective effort among all sectors and individuals;
- a strong sense of social and ecological “connectedness”, including a strong sense of community and concern for others, connectedness with and respect for the natural world and an appreciation of place and time on local and global scales

“If we can take the critical issues, make them relevant and meaningful and make people feel empowered that they can make a difference – even at their own individual level, or at their own community level, then we have a real measure of success..”

Gary Hodge, Chair of Environmental Education Advisory Council, Western Australia

Implications for Professional Development for Sustainability Facilitators

The range and depth of knowledge and skills needed to implement the goals of Our Environment, Our Future will require extensive professional learning amongst those leading the change – these are referred to in this discussion paper generically as ‘sustainability facilitators’

The key focus for the PD project to date has been:

- The ways in which sustainability facilitators can improve what they do, to become better at assisting specific sectors and the wider population in Victoria (and elsewhere) to act more sustainably –across the workplace, the household, the voluntary sector, and the wider community.
- What experienced sustainability facilitators can offer to other sustainability facilitators by way of professional development tools and experiences to assist them to become more effective.

In the PD project, we have not been primarily about designing tools and approaches for better sustainability outcomes per se, although identifying effective tools and approaches is a legitimate part of providing professional development. We have been about identifying and clarifying ways to facilitate and encourage our fellow facilitators to work more effectively for better sustainability outcomes.

These professional development tools have been a combination of, for example:

- Background information
- Direct advice
- Do-it-yourself workshops and other processes (for self-starting groups)
- Workshop and other process design to be used in facilitated settings

Much of what has been developed in Stage 1 of the project will form the background, content and process for more extended workshops and other modes of interaction and learning for sustainability facilitators /educators to be implemented over the next few years.

Early in the project, two key related questions arose. To what extent are we:

- A. defining good practice?
- B. assisting improvement in practice?

A. Defining good practice: Our approach to defining good practice has been deliberately limited in scope and extent for Stage 1 of the PD project – we have needed to be careful not to be too prescriptive – instead, we needed to foster a reflective, adaptive, contextual approach (see below).

On the other hand, there is now considerable agreement as to what constitutes the core of good practice, and a depth and breadth of experience about what works, that needs to be brought to sustainability facilitators, in appropriate ways. We need to provide space and encouragement for them to complement, extend and transform what we are able to provide – this is the essence of the collaborative, reflective, transformative approach so widely identified and supported.

B. Assisting improvement in practice: At base, the early stages of the professional development program can only assist sustainability practitioners in their work, and not tell them how to do it. Why?

- Sectors and sites of sustainability improvement are diverse – we won't be able to cover all aspects of sustainability or be definitive.
- The future for implementation of sustainability practices is unclear, even though the goals may not be.

For example, we do not know how climate change will affect us in detail, although it is clear that we need to seriously address its consequences. Nor do we know how this in turn will affect the availability of water, or our relationships with water – which will be different in each regional context.

- Approaches to sustainability will be a combination of reformation, adaptation and transformation (see below) and this will need to be adjusted for each circumstance or context.

Drawing on a diversity of views: We also should ensure that we don't get locked into one discipline view – we need to draw on knowledge and experience from at least the following:

- Psychology and individual change – including behaviour change and effective change in individual values, including personal or spiritual development
- Community development, sociology, social psychology & group change, marketing

- Advocacy and the concepts and tools for effective empowerment and directional change
- Education and learning for change, including adult learning and lifelong learning
- Environmental and ecological project management, adaptive management and influence

A key problem is that we do not yet have a comprehensive model for how people change to take up sustainability (and sustainability seeking) practices, although some of the elements of this comprehensive change process can be seen in the literature.

What we have instead is a series of strategies that we know have worked in a range of circumstances. We also have some theories about why they worked.

In practice, there are a multiplicity of reasons as to why a strategy or approach worked – what the PD project has aimed to do is to extract some key learnings out of this to pass on to others, while at the same time not assuming that we can be too definitive or recipe oriented. We have also tried to leave open the possibility that practitioners, in applying what we suggest, and what they know and intuit, will add considerably to our collective knowledge.

This opportunity for facilitators and practitioners adding to our knowledge needs to be built in from the start to our project, and especially through the evaluation component, and how this integrates with the other aspects of the project.

We need to bear in mind that there are those (many) who still see change towards sustainability as a technical rather than a human problem, and who are susceptible to others putting forward 'silver bullet' solutions. We need to put into the hands of sustainability facilitator and practitioners ways of working with the enthusiasm of this 'silver bullet' scenario, without succumbing to it.

'High-level learning' (from Scoping Paper to Commissioner for Environment, Victoria, by Brian Sharpley, on behalf of VAEE, 2004)

Learning for sustainability, including PD for sustainability facilitators, will need to include 'high-level' learning to be successful. The programs for learning will build on awareness and encourages individual and/or institutional behavioural change.

There is general agreement that education plays an important role in motivating and empowering people to participate in working towards a sustainable future, and it is usually the basis of Government funding of public education programs.

'High-level' learning, the basis of this important principle, is about the strength and purpose of the learning experience.

It is closely related to the notion of 'deep' learning: The learners want to know the ideas and concepts, they are actively involved and they connect and integrate them with their prior understanding and experience.

'High-level' learning may begin with awareness raising but behavioural change is the final goal: Do participants do things differently following their involvement in the program; is there a willingness to act?

There are four dimensions to 'High-level' learning that can be expressed as sub-principles. These sub-principles are partly hierarchical (see box at right of this text).

Environment Australia identified four goals to guide the development of education for sustainability:

- Awareness raising - 'Does it matter to me?'
- Shaping of values - 'Should I do something about it?'
- Developing knowledge and skills - 'How can I do something about it?'
- Making decisions and taking action - 'What will I do?'

This lines up well with the spectrum of sustainability approaches from 'informing' to 'empowering' outlined below.

Overall approach of the project
- collaboration & consistency of pedagogy between levels

We were also aware that the underlying approach to developing professional learning for sustainability facilitators needs to support and reflect the approaches to learning already identified as being central to fostering sustainability in the wider population. That is, we need to use amongst ourselves, the same approaches we use to foster change towards sustainability in others. Much of the existing material labelled 'PD' for sustainability facilitators is essentially transmissive, and delivered by individual 'experts'. This is despite the material itself often encouraging or proposing collaborative and transformative approaches to learning.

The PD project for Learning to Live Sustainably has drawn on and modelled the pedagogical underpinnings of best practice sustainability learning. The project has aimed, within the confines of time, to be collaborative, contextual, based on the experiences of the sustainability practitioner-learner, and drawing on a mixture of transmissive and transformative approaches. Both approaches are valid, but ultimately, the experiences of many people show that the opportunities for real transformation and lasting change are lost when audiences are 'down-loaded' to.

How to Use 'The Guide Beside'

As mentioned in the introduction, in developing professional learning materials for sustainability facilitators, we faced several problems. The ways we have addressed these problems has determined, in part, the form that the Guide Beside has taken, and how it can best be used.

As outlined clearly in the Environmental Sustainability Framework and the Learning to Live Sustainably Draft Strategy, we know that there needs to be a rapid increase in the number and effectiveness of sustainability facilitators, which is why a rapid expansion in professional learning is required, across a range of contexts and sectors. We also know that, for this professional learning to be effective, we need to redress the imbalance that has developed in our overall approach, with less emphasis on the information transfer (transmissive) paradigm and more emphasis on the participatory learning & change (transformative) paradigm.

We are also aware, from background investigations, as well as forums and other consultations, that a great deal of excellent material already exists, but that the project needs to bring this material together in ways that encourages sustainability facilitators to draw on it for their professional learning. This is partly dependent on providing frameworks to make sense of these existing materials, and demonstrating how they might be transferable, adaptable or otherwise useful across contexts and sectors.

The key questions we faced in overall framing of the professional learning that is required were:

- How can we get better at facilitating participatory learning & change, if we keep running information transfer style professional development?
- How can we learn how to adapt and contextualise our approaches if our practice and professional development is standardised?

Our solution: moving beyond information-transfer and standardisation within PD as acceptable models!

We have tackled this by creating material which is organised to assist the facilitator to design something that's creative, fun and relevant. The organisation of the material is not conducive to an information transfer PD approach. And the first steps to exploring alternatives to the standardisation of PD are also to be found here, in the contextual modules, with opportunity for you to feed back to us additional contextualised PD in the future.

Gone are templates and 'the latest and greatest' in learning 'techniques'. To use The Guide Beside most effectively, we encourage you to take control of your own professional learning to the extent that you feel comfortable to do so. Or you may want to engage a facilitator with 'generic' PL knowledge and skills, but rather than asking them to 'deliver' your program for you and your PL group, you instead ask them to help facilitate you and other representatives to design and deliver the program.

A Practical Example:

Imagine that you are helping to design and run PL programs for fellow and less experienced sustainability facilitators in your context area or sector – for example, you might be working with these facilitators and champions, across the range of organisations, whose objective is to implement a regional greenhouse strategy, or alternatively a regional / wider waste management network of sustainability facilitators, etc ... The group has chosen to develop a professional learning program, to complement and improve the on-ground work they are doing in their community and organisational contexts. You may have decided to engage a 'generic' experienced facilitator of sustainability PL to assist you – although this will not always be necessary.

To remain true to the transformative process, you will not be 'delivering' this PL in the transmissive sense, but rather working with few other experienced facilitators drawn from the group (eg a reference group of experienced co-facilitators – this could be a couple of people, across the general facilitator and champion categories above, or a more substantial/formal reference/design group for larger PL programs) and you will develop together a PL approach which is reflective of the needs and interests of the wider range of participants in the PL program.

As design and implementation facilitators, you will be drawing on the expertise, knowledge and experience of those with whom you are working to design the PL program, and the program sessions themselves will be designed to draw on the expertise, knowledge and experience of the participants. The modules will provide advice and examples of what materials, activities and resources might be useful, for the reference design group to reflect on, adapt, modify or re-invent (or discard in favour of something more appropriate – hopefully in these cases the Module materials in will at least be a prompt for what is more appropriate).

How do written modular PL materials fit in to a transformative approach?

Only in a limited way. We would not be true to the transformative approach if the written modules were the only medium through which this content reached audiences. The realities are that people learn in many ways, written, visual, auditory and so on. But at some point content has to be written down! The PL module material will be a reference point for facilitating the design and development of the PL, as well as its implementation on the ground. So rather than having to deduce this consolidated experience from out of the ether each time the PL is designed and run, the PL module materials will act as prompts and points of reflection of what to include, and possible ways to include it, at both the design stage, and the implementation stage.

The materials will help to order and speed up the process, but should not be used to get in the way of what people consider to be of most relevance to them in PL design and implementation.

For many PL programs, the Module material will act as a useful 'Guide Beside' for the Facilitators who are engaged together to design and implement the PL in a particular context.

In the first instance, we will have people from the PL project acting as these facilitators, working on the ground with co-facilitators drawn from particular contexts, and this process will be used to test the relevance, wording and scope of the module material that has been developed.

In the longer term, our intent is that the Modules will be found less on the shelves and more in the context of real projects as the approaches become adopted by a wider audience of sustainability facilitators.

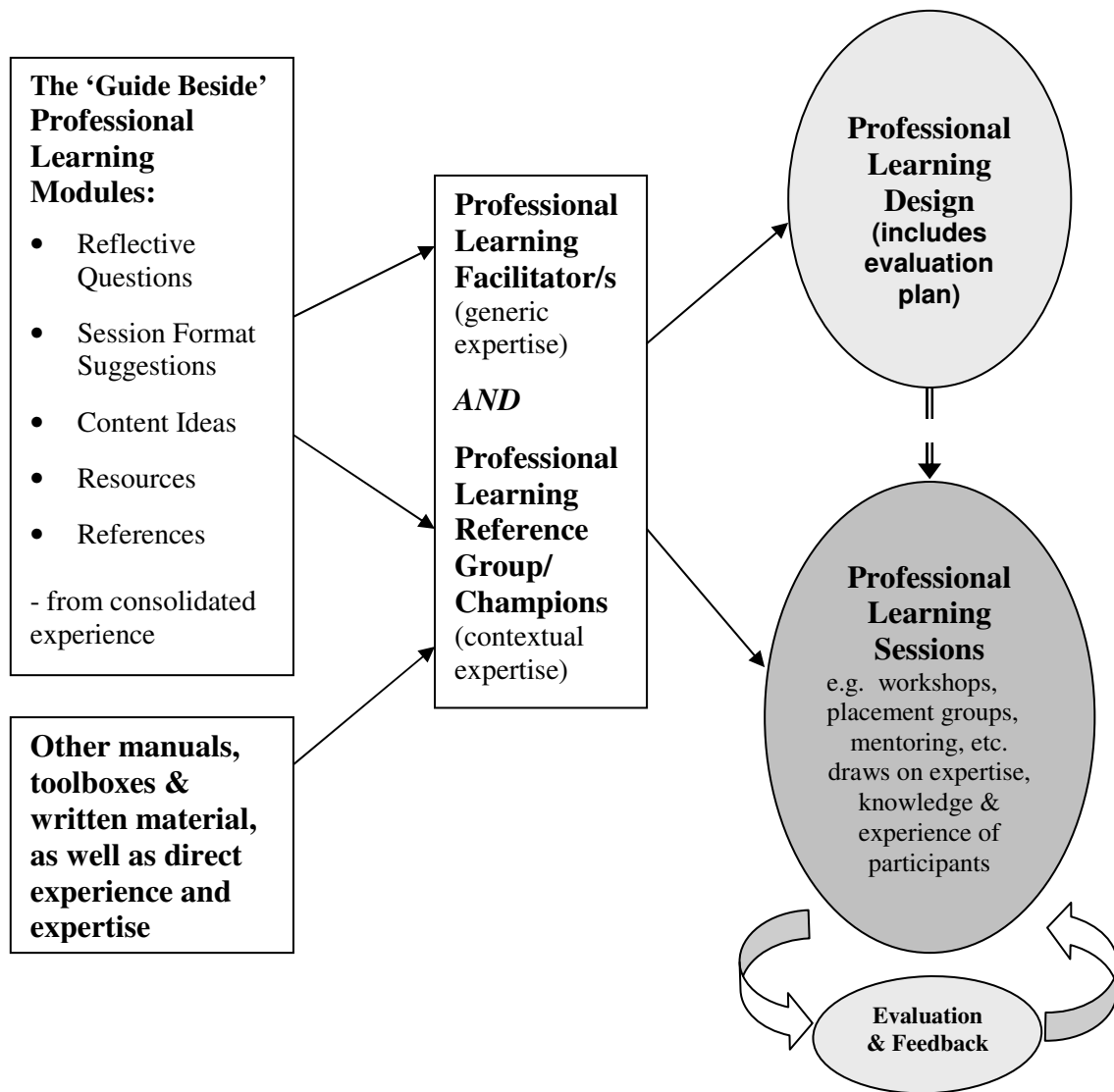
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WRITTEN MATERIALS

DESIGN AND FACILITATION

ACTION LEARNING



- In the 'Guide Beside' approach, generic professional learning (PL) facilitators and contextual champions together are in control of the design and implementation of the PL experiences – this optimises their relevance for PL participants and models the participant-based, transformative approach on which the 'Guide Beside' is based.
- The Professional Learning (PL) Modules will provide a key input into the design of Professional Learning programs by facilitators & champions, as well as into the PL implementation.
- The written material in the Modules (reflective questions, session design suggestions, content, and resource lists) will support the PL facilitator and context based reference/champion groups in the design of the context specific PL program.
- The Module materials can also be drawn on directly in the PL program implementation, and in the design and implementation of the evaluation of the program.

Fostering Professional Learning in Your Organisation and Building Support for Professional Learning

- **What is the level of support and resourcing for environmental sustainability in the context in which you are working, or have other influence?**

This is very variable across organisations, contexts and sectors. To undertake PL of the type outlined in The Guide Beside, you and your colleagues will need to have appropriate support and resources from your organisation. It is often difficult enough to get resources for sustainability programs, let alone for you to learn how to be more effective. Here are some approaches that you might help you build support (details of how to do this can be found in Module 3) :

- ***What is of primary interest to your managers? Can you align this with sustainability PL?***

A significant proportion what is in the Guide Beside overlaps with generic skills and information base that are likely to be of interest to your organisation and potential supporters. Many of these are identified repeatedly in surveys with And yet they are seldom fostered in a genuine sense in most professional development or skills training programs. These skills and knowledge bases include:

- Negotiation and conflict resolution
- Strategic planning
- Program evaluation
- Managed change
- Stakeholder engagement and analysis
- Developing partnerships
- Facilitation and team / capacity building

- ***Does your organisation want to strengthen partnerships with other organisations or extend networks?***

Think especially of those organisation or groups that your organisation might want to build other links with. Environmental sustainability is often good common ground on which to meet, to get to know potential partners.

- ***Can you develop environmental sustainability partnerships with other organisations (or units in your own organisation) to share resources or training?***

Sometimes each organisation or unit has a limited budget for training and development, but if these are put together the potential is often significant greater, and also often is more attractive to external funding bodies, for example to provide matching funding.

- ***Can you include sustainability PL in your personal or professional improvement plan?***

Some organisations have schemes to improve employee skills and training. Perhaps you are able to suggest how these might be modified or directed towards environmental sustainability training, and at the same time meet some of the other training objectives – see above for ideas.

How the Guide Beside is Organised

In addition to the introductory section and sections covering the role of the facilitator and transformative principles, the major sections of the Guide beside consist of a series of Modules. Within the module are suggested content, processes, activities and resources that are intended to help you design and implement your PL program.

Three of these are generic Modules, that are designed to be applicable to all types of PL. These cover in turn:

1. *Processes and Paradigms*
2. *Evaluation*
3. *Organisation and Strategy*

In addition, there are three Contextual Modules, which cover PL in three key intersections of importance to sustainability (Note: in future we intend to expand these to cover more PL intersections); these are:

4. *Schools, Communities and Families*
5. *Municipal Councils and Agencies*
6. *Business and Training*

Each of the Contextual Modules is organised into a sequence of topics, which broadly mirror the steps in the development of a sustainability project, from start to finish. This sequence is not meant to suggest that the PL should follow a similar sequence, but rather is intended to assist PL designers and facilitators to more easily find their way around the various topics, and suggest where specific elements might best be found in the Guide Beside.

For each Contextual Module, the sequence of topics is:

1. *Starters for Professional Learning*
2. *Paradigms and Principles*
3. *Change Models*
4. *Facilitation*
5. *Scoping: Establishing Interest & Engagement*
6. *Goal Setting*
7. *Planning*
8. *Implementing*
9. *Achieving/ Closure/ Succession Planning*

One simple framework for the progression of topics 4 to 8 is:

- Forming (Scoping)
- Storming (Goal setting)
- Norming (Planning)
- Performing (Implementing) & Reforming
- Renewing (Closure/Succession)

No individual framework is likely to capture the richness or complexity of how real projects form or progress.

This is a broad, generic approximation of the sequence in which some sustainability projects develop – in The Guide Beside the sequence is used as an organising framework, rather than as a suggestion that this is the way in which sustainability projects should be planned and implemented.

The first of the Generic Modules (Processes and Paradigms) covers the first seven of these topics, as these (at least up to Goal clarification) precede the substantial elements of Evaluation, as well as Organisation and Strategy. These two other Generic Modules overlap the first Module, beginning at Goal Setting and including all of the topics after this.

Beginning with Reflective Questions

As a way of emphasising the participant-based, transformative framing of the PL, each of these topics in each module begins with a series of questions – hopefully these are some of the questions that are on the minds of the PL designers and implementers, and perhaps the PL participants themselves. For some topics in some Modules, there is just one question, to highlight what the PL materials are attempting to address. However, frequently there is more than one question.

For each question or group of questions (and as a minimum, at least for each topic), there are the following:

Format for the Topic Questions in the Modules:

1. **Reflective Questions** - Generic and Specific
2. **Exemplary Content** which can be drawn on during discussion of questions
3. **Activity Ideas** suggestions for raising & discussing questions (creative, interactive approaches)
4. **Resources** – manual and toolbox chapters/segments which might be useful
5. **References** for further reading and deeper thinking

OUTLINING KEY FRAMEWORKS, PROCESSES AND PARADIGMS

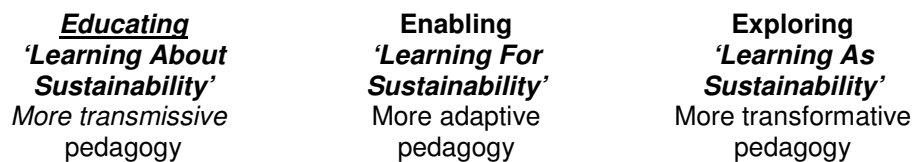
Principles for Sustainability Facilitation & Professional Learning

The project was able to outline a set of agreed principles for effective learning and change – these are outlined in detail in the Appendix 1. Important amongst these were the principles guiding the transformative approaches required for facilitation and leadership. Through the forums and other consultations, some key attributes for sustainability facilitation were identified – these are listed Appendix 2 (Note: what is required for effective facilitation is covered in more detail in Module 1).

The Work of the Sustainability Facilitator, including the Wormhole

There is a focus on promoting transformative learning, at the international, national and state focus – because transmissive approaches have been shown to be inefficient, and in many cases ineffective. For a more extensive discussion of the limitations of current transmissive approaches and the potential for promoting change via transformative approaches.

In considering how to implement these principles in professional learning, we have recognised that there is a spectrum of approaches to learning and facilitation as shown in Figure 1.



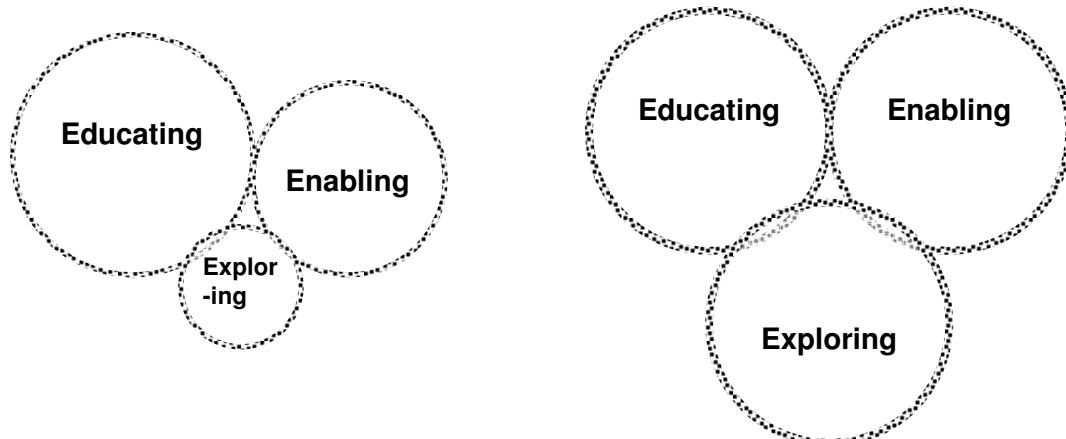
Three roles of the sustainability facilitator - adapted from Stirling (2001).

As outlined by Sharpley (2004) in his report on approaches to sustainability education in Victoria, the problem we face is, not so much that one of these is preferable over the others (each of them have an appropriate place) but rather that there is a heavy imbalance or bias towards more transmissive, 'learning about' educational approaches, which have been shown repeatedly not to be effective on their own - -see Orr (1992) and Hocking (2005) for a discussion of the transmissive orientation of higher education and its impacts on learning for sustainability.

What we envisage instead, is a move towards a balance of approaches as shown in Figure 2:

FROM:

TO:

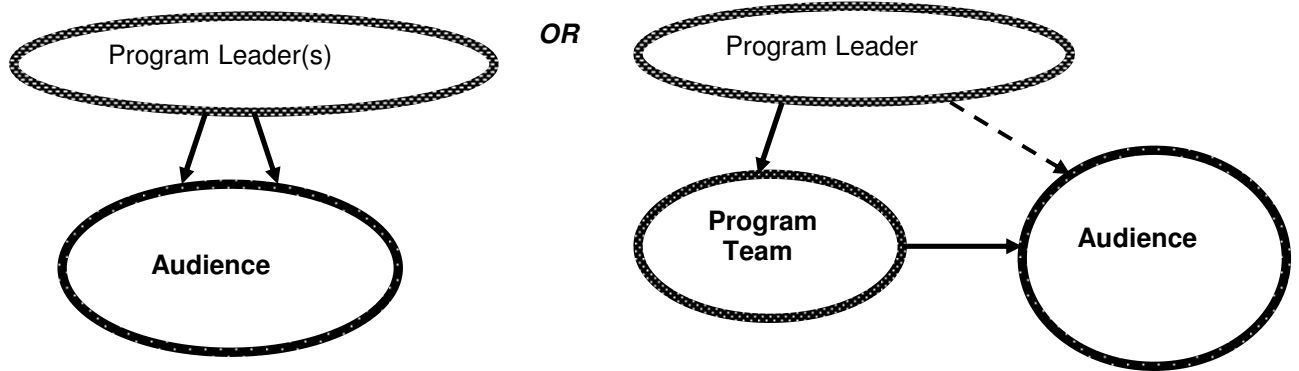


Rebalancing the focus of sustainability facilitation

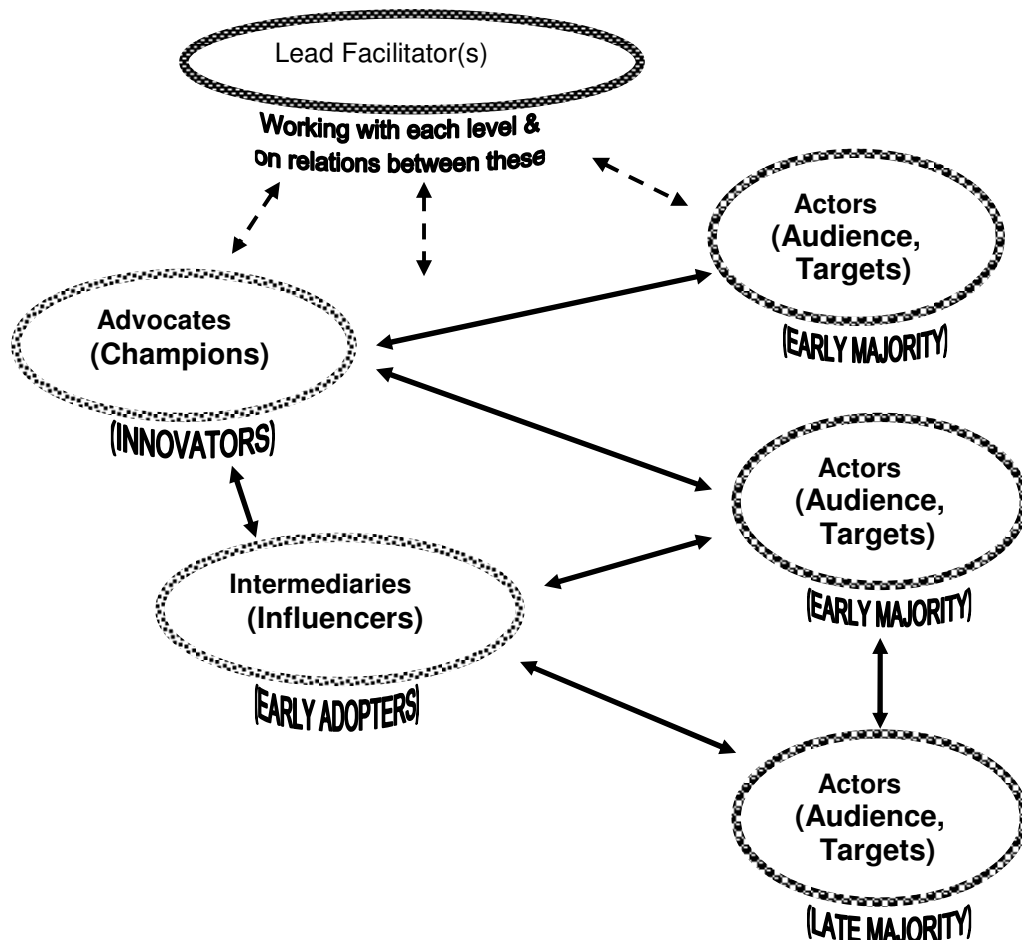
Who the Professional Learning is for: Lead Facilitators, Champions & Early Adopters

The question of who facilitates learning and change for sustainability came to the forefront of numerous discussions, across project forums, structured discussions and small scale consultations, as we have explored putting the paradigm of participant –based (transformative) learning and change into practice.

The styles of sustainability facilitation that are most commonly in use can be summarized as:



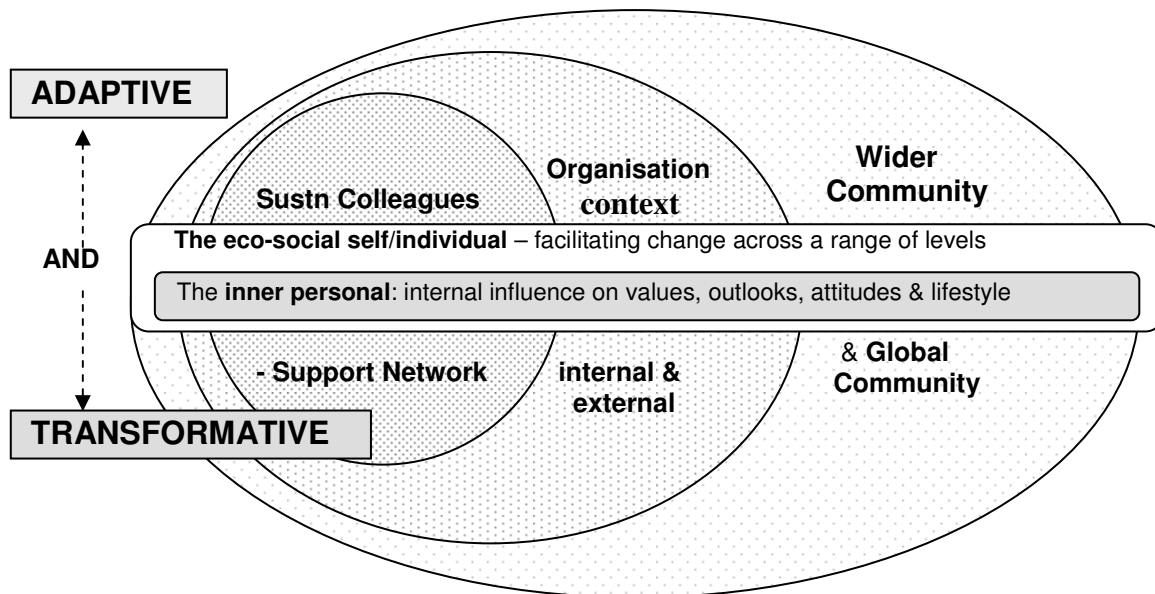
For participant-based learning and change, the alternative is at least three levels of facilitation (adapted from Robinson & Glanzig 2003), and we need to design professional learning programs so that facilitators not only learn transformational, participant based approaches themselves, but also to facilitate uptake of transformative-style skills and frameworks by others involved in facilitation roles at various levels of engagement. The model below uses language from the 'diffusion of innovation' model of change to describe these multiple levels of facilitation. In this new approach, facilitators will need to foster the learning of facilitation skills in project champions, etc. For more details, see Module 1.



The wormhole model: At what levels and in what contexts does the sustainability facilitator work for learning & change? – Key Learning 2

Wormholes in space might one day allow individuals to travel with ease and instantaneously between galaxies and perhaps even universes. Wormholes in the compost allow worms to move between areas which provide warmth and company, and those areas less digested but rich in nutrients and the primary materials for transformation.

The sustainability facilitator wormhole is the individual, and the personal and eco-social elements of the individual, who moves across sectors and levels, at once learning and facilitating learning and change in others, while maintaining the personal support and networks needed to be healthy and effective.



The ‘Wormhole’ model for how sustainability facilitators need to be able to move between sectors and levels to be effective – and employ appropriate strategies for learning & change at each level.

This diagram describes the organisation of professional development into sectors, and recognises the range of issues and demands generated from each sector, within which sustainability facilitators need to operate effectively. For each of these, generic and sector specific professional development can then be identified, and the relationships between these types of professional development can also be identified. In most contexts, the sustainability facilitator will be looking for appropriate champions, influencers and participants in each of these contexts (depending on the nature of the work) and to facilitate the design and participatory implementation of actions and approaches that are most effective at each of these levels. For more details, see Module 1.

References

Senge. P. The Fifth Discipline (1990). The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization. Random House.
 Robinson and Glanznig (2003). Enabling Ecoaction. World Wide Fund for Nature

APPENDIX 1

***Principles for Effective Sustainability Facilitation
and the Development of Professional Learning***

KEY PRINCIPLES WHICH UNDERPIN THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROJECT

Professional Learning for Sustainability Facilitators:

Note: These principles are primarily based around facilitating for sustainability, rather than for developing the program of professional learning – in many instances these will be the same, or fully consistent. However there are principles that can be identified for PL for sustainability facilitation that are distinct from those for facilitation itself (see PART 2 below).

The frameworks and processes (pedagogies) for the PL project (learning how to enhance / improve sustainability facilitation) need to be consistent with the processes and frameworks for fostering change towards sustainability – that is, we affirm transformative learning for change at each level (Group 1 Principles). There are additional principles that are also important for effective change towards sustainability (Group 2) which also apply to broad scale change towards sustainability, as well as to professional learning specifically. Finally, there are also specific principles that are important for those undertaking professional learning to assist their capacity and effectiveness to facilitate change (Group 3 Principles).

The frameworks and processes for using transformative learning for change in facilitation include:

Group 1. Transformative Learning Principles

Reflective practice: Critically and supportively reflecting on our own and each other's practice, as an ongoing process; implies facilitation and leadership for collaborative learning and commitment to contextually relevant outcomes

Valuing and testing prior experience: Testing in our practice what we consider of value from others' experience, both directly from colleagues & from more consolidated sources (eg. written)

Collaboration: Collaborating together to both foster learning and to facilitate change, and co-learning through the exchange of ideas and experiences, to develop common understandings & actions

High Level Learning: recognising and building on the linkages between different levels and types of understanding – through knowledge and understanding, skills & capabilities, attitudes and values, action and participation

Valuing prior knowledge and diverse ways of knowing: Beginning with the existing knowledge & understanding of participants, wherever that is, and finding ways to connect learning & change to the social and cultural experience of participants, and to the preferred ways that participants learn & work together, so they have ownership of the change process, and are empowered to take action

Valuing both content and process: Fostering learning of ways to reflectively and collaborative work together for change, and fostering understanding of basic ecoliteracy concepts in ways that are meaningful to the experiences and preferred learning modes of participants

Learning through doing: Trying out new ways of acting, as well as reflecting on the outcomes of this new behaviour, and adapting or changing this, is central to effective practical learning for change.

... over ...

In implementing this transformative learning approach for change towards sustainability we recognise the importance of:

Group 2: Other Related Principles

Behaviour change is primary goal: Irrespective of how people change, change towards more sustainable actions is the primary goal, and ultimately the behaviour of all people needs to be consistent with environmental sustainability.

Values and ethics: These are the values and ethics which underpin that which we want to sustain and enhance into the future, across positive environmental, social and economic attributes, locally and globally.

Advocacy as well as implementation: Recognising that both the setting and achieving of specific shorter-term achievable sustainability goals (kicking goals), and fostering change towards longer term sustainability goals (shifting the goal posts) are important aspects of change and facilitation; these longer term goals include:

- **Basic Ecoliteracy:** Regardless of the program or approach, over time we need to ensure that everyone in the community is increasing in their understanding of the fundamental ecological ideas that underpin change for environmental sustainability. This does not mean that programs should start with these understandings, but that they are introduced as the program or project continues.
- **Speed (and Scale) of Change:** Over time, we need to build an increase in the pace of change towards sustainability, to minimise the risk that major catastrophic events overtake us – and recognise that ecological limits have a time dimensions that relate to the rate of degradation of resources and ecological systems, and the rates at which these can recover or be replaced by sustainable alternatives.

Bottom up as well as top down: Wisdom resides in the participants and those they are connected to in the wider community, and this wisdom needs to be evoked and aligned with the broad requirements of learning and change toward sustainability – so that everyone involved comes to see themselves learners, expert knowledge and skills are integrated with more general knowledge and skills, and all involved become more effective facilitators for learning and change

Using practical examples: Exemplars, stories, case studies and uses of technologies which at once capture key principles of learning and changing, and the richness of the contexts within which learning and change take place

Regulation and Opportunity: Regulation is an important component of change for sustainability, but must be developed in conjunction with opportunities for transformative learning, as well as encouragement, commitment and incentives for action.

The principles in Group 1 and Group 2 apply to both facilitation of change towards sustainability, in the wider community, as well as to the implementation of programs of professional learning for sustainability facilitators. There are additional principles that are specifically relevant to professional learning for sustainability facilitators, as follows (Note: ultimately many of these principles will apply at all levels of change for sustainability, not just PL for sustainability facilitators):

... over ...

Group 3: Additional Principles for Professional Learning

Sustaining Ourselves: Because facilitating change for sustainability involves personal as well as professional commitment, and deals with changing peoples' values, and advocating for change as well as achieving pre-set sustainability goals, those undertaking this work meet significant challenges, both personal and institutional. The work entails a level of personal/emotional risk, which requires recognition of this risk, and ways to maintain one's inner integrity and sense of self and values in the face of these risks – developing these are a legitimate part of professional learning.

Fostering a community of experienced sustainability facilitators: as one of the key ways to promote reflective and collaborative learning, including exchange of ideas, information and approaches, as well as supporting one another through major change and challenges, personal and professional.

Being able to facilitate learning and change for sustainability is a necessary but insufficient condition for being able to foster learning (PL): the project needs to identify not only the key elements for successful facilitation, but the conditions and inputs required for people to learn to facilitate better and with more flexibility (in a combination of direct learning from others, background sources and reflective, collaborative practice)

Everyone is a learner: this requires facilitators of PL to balance the need to draw on and consolidate the knowledge and expertise already existing within the community of experienced sustainability facilitators (including for example, written material such as manuals, toolboxes and research papers), with the need to maintain flexibility and adaptability in the implementation of this knowledge and expertise in particular contexts. Also to allow for adaptability with changing circumstances, opportunities for new approaches and perspectives to arise, and for the frameworks and processes (pedagogies) of all participants, including experienced facilitators, to be drawn on in grounded and reflective and transformative ways.

APPENDIX 2

Some Key Attributes of Effective Sustainability Facilitators

- Awareness of the process of change
 - social change and organisational change
- Positive, optimistic & opportunistic
 - a sense of humour
- Acknowledging of 'audience' (those one seeks to facilitate to change)
 - empathetic & sensitive to difference
- An active & respectful listener who values where people are at & what they are saying
 - building on previous experience of individuals & the group
 - starting where people are at and not where you are at
- Strong conceptual understanding of what sustainability is about & what is needed
 - especially having expertise & credibility in the sector one is seeking to evoke change
- Evoking & sharing in the excitement of discovery
 - helping to facilitate a process of collaborative /co – learning
- Possessing a skill bank of strategic tools & processes for facilitating change towards sustainability – and building on this in an ongoing way
- Recognizing & acknowledging the social challenges of working towards sustainability – in self and others
- Knowing how to/having ability & resilience to 'get back on the bike'
 - in the face of challenges thrown up by those one seeks to change
 - in the face of attack/challenge by those resisting change
 - swimming against the inertia of major regional, national global challenges
- Generating a feeling of being trusted and respected within the learning and change context
- Being patient: to effect change may be like the central Asian concept of 'doing business after eating together and sharing seven bags of salt'
 - needing to be patient and pay attention to relationships
- 'Half-hearted avengers' – being clear about what you are advocating for, but acting on this in ways that engage people, rather than putting them off
- Attitude - open to new ideas & information
 - able to critically and creatively reflect on own practice

**Recommendations from the Professional Development for Sustainability Educators:
Stage 1 Laying the Foundations and Piloting Practical Outcomes are as follows:**

General Recommendations:

- Ongoing support for, and consolidation of, a network of sustainability facilitators, as built during Stage 1 of the PD project, and in a parallel and overlapping way through the Sustainable Education Round Table.
- Encouragement and support for existing larger scale sustainability projects to work with experienced (lead) facilitators to design and implement professional learning programs for leaders, champions and other influences within these projects.
- Support for more generalised training professional learning programs on facilitating, planning, organising and evaluating sustainability programs, and the inter-relationships of these, presented through existing professional associations (for example, the Victorian Association for Environmental Education)
- Support for pilot projects exploring other ways of developing professional learning for sustainability facilitation, for example through mentoring and professional placements (internships) with identified ways to link these to core material in the guide beside – one example is a mentoring/internship program with a parallel series of focused workshops for interns/mentees, drawn from material in the Guide Beside, and designed collaboratively with participation of the interns/mentees and those with whom they are placed.

Specific Recommendations:

Ongoing. To be revisited in the light of Stage 2 of this project.

The Guide Beside is an outcome of the Professional Development Project: Stage 1, under the Learning to Live Sustainably Strategy of the Victorian State Government.

The Guide Beside is a Professional Development planner designed to assist those facilitating learning and change for environmental sustainability.

In the Guide Beside, we take a new approach to Professional Development, which has been widely referred to as 'transformative' learning and change.

Our clear purpose in taking this new direction were two fold:

To place control of professional development design and implementation in the hands of practitioners, rather than as arising from 'experts' or 'standardised' approaches.

To foster, in the way that professional development is undertaken, the same transformative learning and change processes that need to be incorporated into the work of the sustainability facilitator.

The **Goals** of the project were as follows:

- To foster learning and behaviour for environmental sustainability [across sectors] in Victoria, by improving the depth and breadth of professional learning of those who facilitate this learning and behaviour change (sustainability facilitators); in particular by:
- establishing a community of sustainability facilitators, across sectors and levels, who are able to learn from one another, and from consolidated experience;
- identifying key principles and processes that have been effective in fostering sustainability learning and behaviour change;
- providing a series of modules outlining potentially useful activities, resources and references, and presenting these in such a way as to encourage sustainability facilitators to design and develop their own professional learning through reflective processes, by drawing on the module material, as well as other sources, and their own collective experiences;
- outlining ways in which professional learning for sustainability can be promoted within organisations and to potential funders and other stakeholders, so that the total base of professional learning for sustainability facilitation is increased;
- exploring how generalised skills, frameworks and actions for sustainability are affected and tailored by the contexts within which the sustainability facilitators are acting.