



Australian Government
Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts



Australian
Sustainable Schools Initiative

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The Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) involves a whole-of-school approach to education for sustainability with measurable environmental, financial, educational and social outcomes.

It implements improvements in a school's management of resources and facilities and integrates this approach into the existing curriculum and daily running of the school. Students participate in an action learning – or learning by doing – process.

AuSSI also involves a school's local community through parents, local government and local industry.

Following pilots run in New South Wales and Victoria, AuSSI is being implemented in all states and territories, in partnership with state and territory education and environment agencies.

At the national level, AuSSI supports the National Action Plan for Environmental Education (2000) and gives effect to the concepts and actions identified in Educating for a Sustainable Future – a National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools (2005).

AuSSI does not replace other environmental education activities in schools; rather it links to and complements existing programs such as Energy Smart Schools, WasteWise, Waterwatch, Waterwise, Landcare and the Reef Guardian Schools Program. As part of the Initiative, teachers can receive much needed access to resources and professional learning in education for sustainability, delivered through supporting agencies and environmental education centres.

For more information see: www.environment.gov.au/education/aussi



Real achievements

- ▶ More than 2000 schools and 570,000 students across Australia are now participating in AuSSI.
- ▶ Some participating schools have reported reductions in waste collection of up to 80%, reductions in water consumption of up to 60%, and savings on energy consumption of 20% with commensurate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Schools are also achieving financial savings and broader social and educational benefits from increased school pride and interest in learning.
- ▶ The following quote illustrates the type of educational and social benefits being achieved:

'A systematic approach through the curriculum following a comprehensive audit exposes children to all elements of sustainability. They are increasingly accepting responsibility for actions within the program and are the leading edge in attitude change as these practices are transferred to home and the community'

Source: Tilbury, D. (2005). Cited in *Journal of the Australian Geography Teachers Association*.

The Guiding Principles of AuSSI

The Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative:

- ▶ Seeks to develop a school culture committed to the principles of sustainable development;
- ▶ Seeks to go beyond awareness raising to action learning and integration with school curricula;
- ▶ Encourages the involvement of the whole school;
- ▶ Encourages the involvement of a school's local community and a shift in the broader community towards more sustainable practices and processes;
- ▶ Seeks to develop relationships with other areas that impact on the organisation and management of a school;
- ▶ Is founded on a sound basis of theory and practice in schools and school systems, quality teaching and learning, and education for sustainability; and
- ▶ Encourages schools to achieve measurable social, environmental, educational and financial outcomes.

AuSSI is a partnership of the Australian Government, the states and territories that seeks to support schools and their communities to become sustainable. More information is available at www.environment.gov.au/education/aussi

