

ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic Initiative

Capability statements for schools

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Introduction

These capability statements describe what success would look like in schools that have sustainability embedded in their operations, infrastructure, curriculum, culture and community partnerships.

Please note that these statements are not intended as a definitive list of capabilities but rather as a snapshot and benchmark to encourage continuous improvement. The statements are divided into three simple areas – what schools know, what they value and what they do.

The statements were developed following desktop research of Victorian, Australian and international Education for Sustainability (EfS) programs in schools (see research source list on page 5).

We recommend you also read the ‘Capability statements for service providers’ in conjunction with this document.

	What schools know	What schools value	What schools do
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic framework links outcomes across all areas: culture and policy, daily operations, buildings and grounds, curriculum and community partnerships. Teachers and school leaders know how to find available resources and support. The school’s vision of its sustainability journey and its current status before moving on to action planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective community partnerships. A sustainability ethos. The interdependence of water, waste, energy and biodiversity as they relate to the natural world. Student leadership. Whole school planning and participation. Indigenous perspectives. Transformative processes ie; empowering the school community for positive behaviour change. Local and global citizenship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include sustainability in our planning (school plan, curriculum documents, policy statements, strategy plans) Allocate resources, including staffing responsibilities and budget. Monitor our progress and report regularly to our School Council and school community.
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a resilient and sustainable culture requires ongoing support and is a long-term process. How to promote and embed sustainable practices. How to be flexible in a changing environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good governance practices in EfS. Commitment to EfS Cooperation and collaboration in the school community. The recognition of achievements. Learning about sustainability is fun and enjoyable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share ownership of sustainability initiatives and decision making. Engage the school leadership team Link our curriculum with sustainability and other cross-curriculum perspectives such as: student wellbeing, student engagement, career pathways, student learning, ICT, active transport and healthy nutrition Implement a variety of engagement techniques eg linking canteens to kitchen gardens. Publicise the school’s sustainability priority. Incorporate sustainability into inductions for new staff and pre-service/first year teachers and provide professional learning for all staff. Participate in certification, awards and publication of our sustainability journey. Identify, reflect upon, celebrate and share successes and learnings.
Daily operations, buildings and grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to reduce resource usage in areas of water, waste and energy. The principles of sustainable procurement. How to appropriately support local and regional biodiversity. The economic, social and environmental benefits The reasons for and the importance of monitoring and reducing environmental impacts. Government policy and targets. How to access sustainable design guidelines and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable practices and design. The link between sustainable practices and financial savings. Evidence base for strategy and implementation Effective model for the school and the wider community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct audits and establish benchmarks as part of a continuous cycle of planning. Engage students in environmental performance planning, monitoring and improvement. Relate campus operations and environmental performance data to curriculum activities Identify opportunities for resource efficiency to provide financial savings. Engage in ethical and sustainable procurement practices, including a focus on healthy eating, goods and services where practical.

	What schools know	What schools value	What schools do
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability perspectives in student learning outcomes relate directly to state and national curriculum frameworks. That knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours for sustainability flow between school and home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning from others, sharing what we know and engaging in EfS professional development. EfS curriculum that is community-based and action-oriented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed sustainability in all curriculum areas as a cross-curriculum perspective. We design curriculum activities to develop civic values and student leadership skills. Include special environmental events, celebrations and projects in our curriculum. Use of our natural environment as a classroom/context for learning. Use EfS as a platform to foster the development of systems and critical thinking skills. Access and build on external EfS programs.
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the rationale for engaging with the school and or local community ie. strengthening and reinforcing education, connection and reputation How to identify, establish and maintain partnerships and networks with community and other learning institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our position as a role model for sustainability Intergenerational and intercultural engagement eg working with retirement home on veggie garden. Our community relationships and our shared responsibility for sustainability Partnerships with local government, businesses and community organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with community/local government, other schools and organisations to achieve change on an environmental sustainability issue or campaign. Share learnings with colleagues through networks. Empower students to be catalysts for change in their school and local community.

Research sources

- ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic – Building Future Capacity, (SV unpublished 2009)
- Evaluation of the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic Program (SV unpublished 2009)
- Earth Smart Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan 2008-2012, Department of Education, Training and the Arts, Queensland Government.
- Learning for our future: Scotland’s first action plan for the UN Decade for Sustainable Development, (2006) Scottish Executive
- Australian Journal of Environmental Education, Volume 25, 2009
- Educating for a sustainable future: A National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools, Dept of Environment and Heritage, Australian Government (2005)
- Living Sustainably, The Australian Government’s National Action Plan for Education for Sustainability, Dept of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Australian Government (2009)
- Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, Welsh Assembly Government, July 2008
- Report on the EnviroSchools Programme, New Zealand: Education for Sustainability in New Zealand Schools, (2009), Dr. Chris Eames, University of Waikato
- AuSSI-Tas Sustainable Schools Showcase 2010, Department of Education Tasmania

