

Communicating the ‘Sustainability in Schools’ website

President’s Message

Sustainability is one of the Australian Curriculum’s three cross-curriculum priorities, however it often gets overlooked by busy teachers. The Australian Education for Sustainability Alliance, of which ACSSO is a member, has been looking into pathways to make education for sustainability more accessible for teachers and students.

The result is a website called ‘Getting Started with Sustainability in Schools’ - www.sustainabilityinschools.edu.au. This site works as a portal of sustainability education resources and case studies for teachers. The site talks teachers through how to incorporate sustainability education into their classrooms, schools and communities, and for those already active in the area – how to go to the next step and share their skills with others. This is a fabulous new resource, and I highly encourage you to make sure your local school is using it.

The generic longer story

The newly released Getting Started with Sustainability in Schools website is a valuable resource for teachers. It is packed with case studies from teachers around Australia and is a portal for resources ready for use in the classroom.

The website was guided by research conducted by the Australian Education for Sustainability Alliance’s Curriculum Project, which investigated how best to help teachers who are getting started with sustainability to incorporate education for sustainability across the curriculum.

www.sustainabilityinschools.edu.au

The Australian Education for Sustainability Alliance (AESA) is an alliance of organisations in the education, union, youth and environment sectors that want all Australians to have access to the skills, practices and values of sustainability, through the education system and throughout life.

AESA wanted to find the best way to empower teachers and students – in the classroom, the school and the entire community – with the tools to help Australia become more sustainable. In 2015, AESA surveyed more than 5,000 teachers, curriculum coordinators and principals from government and non-government schools across the country, to find out how best to help.

More than 90 per cent of respondents agreed that sustainability is important, of value to students, and should be integrated into the curriculum. A further 60 per cent said they were interested in including sustainability into their teaching – but asked for assistance to kick start sustainability teaching at their school. Essentially, teachers asked for a getting started guide.

AESA created the Getting Started with Sustainability in Schools website in response to these needs. It is a portal to direct teachers to high quality education resources, contains case

studies focused on how to create change, and information on how to link it all back to the curriculum – in an accessible, direct way.

www.sustainabilityinschools.edu.au

Please share this site widely, and feel free to send us suggestions for other great resources or networks we can add at info@educationforsustainability.org.au

Scoutle's description of the site:

This rich website is an outstanding resource for the Sustainability cross-curriculum priority in the F-10 curriculum. The website's 'In the curriculum' section helps teachers understand more fully what the cross-curriculum priority is about and how it connects with EfS. It usefully expands upon the Australian Curriculum's definition of sustainability, provides a compelling rationale for incorporating sustainability, outlines seven principles underpinning EfS, and describes how the Sustainability cross-curriculum priority is organised and plays out in various learning areas and subjects. The Resource portal uses the priority's key concepts for search.

The resource is also of considerable value for the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, in particular Standard 6 Professional engagement, at all career stages. The teacher profiles are particularly useful in this respect and the website provides opportunities for teachers and school leaders to contribute examples of their own professional practice. The Support section helps teachers connect with professional networks.

The website succeeds in achieving its stated aim of helping teachers get started in embedding sustainability into the classroom, school and community. It embodies good practice in adult learning and is presented in ways likely to engage the intended audience. The Steps section, in particular, is exemplary in the way it brings together a range of supportive advice, strategies, profiles and resources.