



Queensland Environmentally Sustainable Schools Initiative (QESSI)

The mission of the Queensland Environmentally Sustainable Schools Initiative (QESSI) is to establish a network of environmentally sustainable schools that demonstrate curricula connections and environmental action based on ecological sustainable development principles. QESSI's vision is for all schools in Queensland to be Environmentally Sustainable Schools. Now how do we get to this destination?

QESSI is the integration of existing environmental education for a sustainable future programs for schools into a holistic process with measurable environmental, economic, social and educational outcomes. QESSI is a demonstration of the strategic outcomes that are outlined in the United Nations – Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-14 Draft International Implementation Scheme. QESSI supports the Nationally agreed common elements for Sustainable Schools, through the implementation of efficiencies in a school's management of resources such as energy, waste, water and biodiversity through school grounds improvements and integrates this approach into the existing curriculum and daily running of the school. The incorporation and involvement of the school's local community is a critical element of the initiative.

A QESSI Strategic Action Plan will form the direction for QESSI for 2005-07. There are eight goals within this plan to address the creation of an environmentally sustainable school.

- 1) encouraging schools to be a total learning organization for a sustainable future
- 2) promoting a dynamic curriculum

process and extra-curricula activities
3) empowering ourselves and others to make the necessary changes

- 4) encouraging and supporting skilled, committed and aware staff
- 5) creating school facilities that demonstrate and support sustainability
- 6) implementing sustainable management systems in schools
- 7) improving school resource management, including water, waste, energy, transport and school grounds



- 8) encouraging schools and local communities to be strongly linked

The current key partners in the QESSI are Education Queensland (as the lead agency), Federal Department of Environment and Heritage (seed funding), Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, Keep Australia Beautiful – Queensland, Envirocom (Environmental Education company) and Queensland Transport. There are several other organisation and agencies that form the QESSI Alliance. A QESSI Network of individuals, schools, associations and others

interested in progressing QESSI has been formed with a communication and professional development focus. The patron for QESSI is Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe.

The coordination of QESSI is through a State steering committee. The primary roles of the QESSI steering committee will be to provide: resources; development of partnerships; liaison between cooperative stakeholders; marketing; building capacity within the suite of service providers; promote environmental awards schemes; a framework for the program; an incentive scheme; liaise with other National groups pursuing similar goals; pursue possible accreditation, along with strategies for evaluating and monitoring.

Sustainability outcomes in the educational, social, economic and environmental areas will be collated and form part of a State of the Environment report of the progress of QESSI, so the coordinated approach to achieving environmentally sustainable schools across Queensland can be celebrated by all the partners in this process.

So, QESSI is not another program or product in a market place that is saturated with resources that focus on environmental education for a sustainable future for schools. What QESSI is aiming to do is build the capacity of existing service providers to achieve their goals and collectively we can achieve the vision of all schools in Queensland demonstrating environmentally sustainable practice.

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Qessi Alliance

Building Partnerships for Environmentally Sustainable Schools



<http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/environment/outdoor/qessi.html>

This diagram depicts the Alliance members who were involved at the time of this Plan being made (April 2005) - partnerships will grow and change