

Monash University

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

A Framework for Embedding Sustainability Within Education at Monash University

This paper was tabled at VCG (Environment) 2/2009, 10 June 2009, on behalf of Professor Adam Shoemaker. It outlines a framework for embedding sustainability within education at Monash University. The paper is now being circulated within the broader Monash University community for comment.

Summary

The Education for Sustainability Framework (ESF) has been prepared following the 2009 Senior Management Conference and 2009 Council Retreat, which reconfirmed the centrality of the integration of environmental sustainability into all aspects of University activities and operations. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) has assumed responsibility for the preparation of a University Plan to embed sustainability in education at Monash. The ESF provides a structure and mechanism for this to be achieved.

Background

Monash University's recognition of the critical importance of Education for Sustainability is evidenced in the Monash Passport, Graduate Attributes, the range of unit offerings in this field, the creation of the Monash Sustainability Institute and ClimateWorks Australia, and the establishment of VCG (Environment) and the Office of Environmental Sustainability.

Monash Passport

The Monash Passport offers every Monash undergraduate student the opportunity to make a tangible contribution to improving the world and integrates these activities into the curriculum. A number of Monash Passport initiatives have been designed, in part, to address Education for Sustainability. These include:

- Designing multi-campus teaching and learning environments that utilise information, communication and eLearning technologies to enable virtual mobility including international study opportunities;
- Establishing development partnerships with top NGOs to provide opportunities for students to participate in a range of activities related to environmental sustainability and supporting campus-based organisations such as Monash Engineers Without Borders, which implement sustainable engineering projects;
- Giving students the opportunity to travel to South Africa and work with community groups to gain a first hand understanding of the reality of sustainability and development issues as volunteers or through a 3rd Year field study; and
- Developing sophisticated simulations in a diverse range of disciplines that reduce the need for field travel and consumption of resources.

Graduate Attributes

Monash University's Graduate Attributes provide for:

1. Responsible and effective global citizens who engage in an internationalised world, exhibit cross cultural competence, and demonstrate ethical values; and
2. Critical and creative scholars who produce innovative solutions to problems, apply research skills to a range of challenges, and communicate perceptively and effectively.

Unit Offerings

Monash University has provided opportunities for students in what is now known as Education for Sustainability since the 1970s. In 2008 there were over 150 UG and GPG unit offerings with an EFTSL of approximately 650.

Monash Sustainability Institute, ClimateWorks Australia and Vice-Chancellor's Group (Environment)

The establishment in 2008 of both the Monash Sustainability Institute and VCG (Environment) has provided further impetus and support to Monash activities in this area. In late 2008 The Myer Foundation and MSI established a partnership to form a new \$4.6 million initiative, ClimateWorks Australia. VCG(E) set up an Education for Sustainability Subcommittee chaired by the DVC(E) with membership drawn from the wide range of stakeholders. The experience gained in 2008 led to a decision that Academic Board and its Committees would assume responsibility for the Education for Sustainability agenda going forward. Meeting 2/2009 of the LTQC of Education Committee resolved that the ODVC(E) would prepare a University Plan to embed sustainability within education and research-inspired education activities at Monash.

Education for Sustainability Framework

The Education for Sustainability Framework is shown diagrammatically in Appendix 1.

Responsibility

The PVC (Learning and Teaching) will assume the responsibility for outcomes noted at LTQC Meeting 2/2009 and Education Committee 2/09 (see Appendix 2).

Staffing

A part-time appointment will be made of a senior academic as Convenor, Education for Sustainability (and additional staffing as required) reporting to the PVC (L&T) at an approximate full year cost of \$100,000 in the July-December 2009 period and \$200,000 in 2010. These funds will be provided from Education Portfolio Initiatives for this period.

Outcomes

The Convenor, Education for Sustainability will have a major responsibility for achievement of the following outcomes:

- Together with Faculties, further developing the range of Education for Sustainability units and course offerings, creating mechanisms to ensure that the range of units are accessible to students across faculties and that students are aware of these as possible electives;
- Together with Faculties, developing faculty-specific approaches for orientation and involvement in Education for Sustainability;
- Together with Faculties, monitoring the implementation, planning and success of embedding Education for Sustainability into the curriculum through Faculty Strategic Plans;
- Bringing together key leaders in Education for Sustainability from each Faculty to develop an interdisciplinary Honours in Sustainability;
- Together with CALT, developing an Education for Sustainability elective as part of the GCHE;

- Together with ClimateWorks Australia ensuring that there is a focus of research-inspired education priorities on sustainability and developing research-inspired education programs;
- Together with the Manager, Green Steps, designing a Green Steps for-credit program that is jointly developed with our NGO partners;
- Together with the Office of Environmental Sustainability, encouraging sustainable use of resources in teaching practice and delivery;
- Establishing an Education for Sustainability Reference Group comprising staff and student ‘champions’ ;
- Establishing an Education for Sustainability Small Grants Program in 2010 as part of the Monash Passport to provide grants for student-projects related to Education for Sustainability;
- Advising on the implementation of the Education for Sustainability aspects of the Talloires Declaration for reporting to VCG(E); and
- Making recommendations to LTQC and EC on embedding Education for Sustainability.

Review of these Arrangements

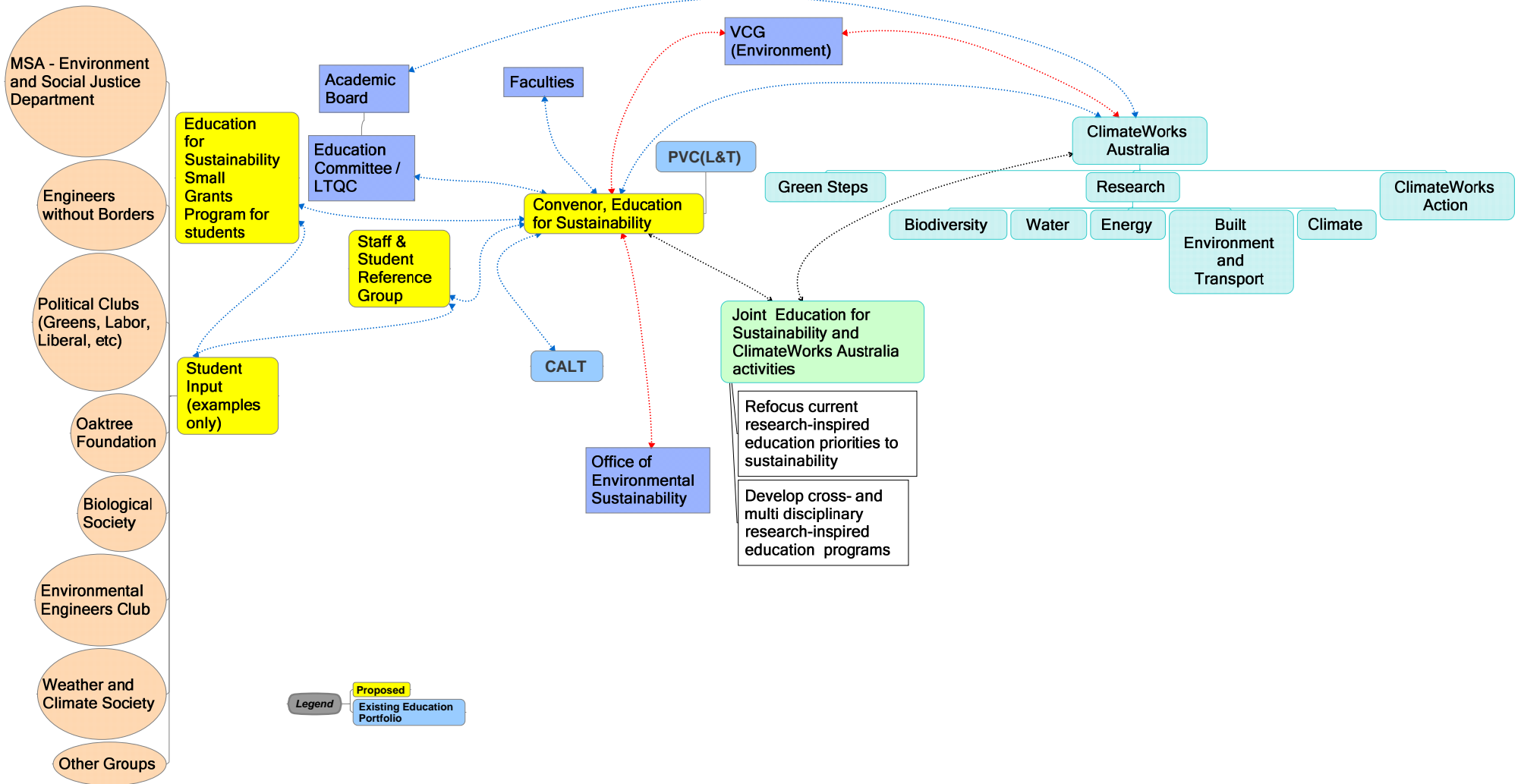
A review of the ESF will take place in 2010.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Education for Sustainability Framework Diagram

Appendix 2. Extracts of LTQC and EC Minutes

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Education for Sustainability Framework



Education for Sustainability Framework Appendix 2

(Draft Education Committee Minutes Meeting 2/2009)

- the Education for Sustainability (EFS) Working Group would engage both internal and external stakeholders to identify key initiatives and work towards the integration of sustainability in education activities across the University community. Such activities could include student-centred initiatives to empower and engage Monash students, proposals for Monash to work in cooperation with non-government organisations such as World Vision, and a sustainability component for commencing students during orientation to Monash that would add value to the Monash Passport; and
- an online resource located on the University Library website to promote sustainability could be established.

(Confirmed Learning, Teaching and Quality Minutes Meeting 2.09)

- In consultation the Deans, the funding of sustainability programs and the refocusing of current program priorities to these areas;
- Preparation of a generic online presentation to promote sustainability and climate change programs across all schools and departments;
- Development of a checklist to promote at the school/department level the creation of sustainability programs;
- Opportunities to work with Associate Deans (Teaching/Education) to develop cross/multi-disciplinary programs;