

The Sustainability Education Roundtable is an informal, broadly based forum open to all who share a commitment to a comprehensive, integrated approach to education for sustainability. We believe in developing stewardship values, behaviours, and lifestyles in Victoria through sustainability education.

The round table working group is chaired by Mike Hill and hosted by CERES and includes participation from Department of Sustainability and Education, Sustainability Victoria, EPA, Environment Victoria, Gould League, LeastWaste, Maunsell, VAAE, Victoria University, and Western Region Environment Centre.

THE LAST ROUNDTABLE:

The final roundtable in the “Sustainability Education Roundtable” series was held on 24th May, 2006, the theme being “Evaluation”.

TWO SUMMARIES ARE ON THEIR WAY:

The working group is now active in writing up not only the results of that individual roundtable meeting, but also an account of the whole series of roundtable meetings and how they may have assisted with Victoria’s hopes for sustainability education:

FINAL BULLETINS:

This is one of the last bulletins. It gives a quick overview of the whole Roundtable process and its outcomes.

In this Bulletin:

1. A brief reminder of the whole Roundtable program
2. Summary report on the Roundtable of May 24th on “Evaluation”
3. Still to come in future Bulletins
 - Evaluation of the whole Roundtable program
 - Recommendations...
 - Legacy project 1; VAAE continues the work
 - Legacy project 2; the Sustainability Education ‘think tank’
4. Opportunities for providing feedback and comment – do it now!

1. The whole program in retrospect

The Sustainability Education Roundtable program began with initiatives from around the sectors all aimed at developing a stronger sense of collective identity amongst educators and organisations involved in sustainability education. This culminated in an approach to Mike Hill to convene a meeting of interested parties at CERES in 2003. Those attending included staff from DSE, DET, EPA and EcoRecycle Victoria, representatives from water authorities, Museum Victoria and NGOs and academics from tertiary education institutions.

This meeting coined the idea of a roundtable charged with the purpose of bringing people together to share experiences and to generate support and recognition for those working in the field.

There have been two distinct series of roundtables;

- The first series in 2004, with four Roundtable meetings
- The second in 2005 and 2006 with a further five Roundtable meetings .

CERES has hosted the Roundtable program, and with funding support from DSE and an active working group, provided secretariat services for the program. The face of the program was Mike Hill as the program convenor and MC at each of the round tables.

The program was inspired and organised and given a sense of direction and focus by a highly competent group of volunteers who came to form a self-selecting Working Group. Members of this group come from government agencies, education bodies including universities and from a variety of NGOs from the business, local government and community sectors.

A report from the first Roundtable series "*Sustainability Education: Learning to Change*" was provided to the Minister for Environment and other stakeholders.

DSE agreed to fund a second series of roundtable meetings, and now that they have ended, the Working Group has several tasks in front of it:

- to reflect on and undertake an evaluation of the meetings
- to produce a report on findings
- to ensure these recommendations have an opportunity of being carried out
- to design and seek funding for some legacy activity that will ensure the wonderful momentum of the Roundtable Project is not lost

We thought a statistical summary of the Roundtable Project would highlight its value!

The Sustainability Education Roundtable Project:

- Nine roundtable meetings were held
- In support of these, about 24 meetings of the Working Group were held
- About 50 organisations (public and private sector) were represented at the round-tables
- About 800 people turned up
- New activity was generated in different sectors
 - An association of local government sustainability educators was formed
 - DIIRD, EPA and Swinburne University established a program to provide support for sustainability educators working in the industry and business sectors
- There are currently 400 people on the mailing list

2. **Key Outcomes of the Roundtable 7 on Evaluation**

How do we know when we've got there?

Setting and assessing outcomes for sustainability learning & change programs

Wednesday 24th May, 60L Green Building, 60 Leicester St, Carlton South

reported by Colin Hocking on behalf of the Roundtable Working Group, June 2006

Roundtable 7 invited participants to find out more about, and help shape answers to, the following issues:

- How do we know when we have been successful? What is success anyway?
- What do others need and want to know about our outcomes, positive and negative?
- How do we know if we are moving forward? And if we are moving fast enough?
- Sustainability: how do we know if we have got there?
- How will 'they' (funders, other stakeholders, supporters & influencers) determine whether we've been successful? What about continuous improvement?
- Are there differences in anticipated outcomes between practitioners, participants, funders and other stakeholders?
- Can we build some shared objectives and shared ways of evaluating these?
- And what can we make out of the links and differences between environmental, social and economic outcomes?

The Roundtable began with a brief case study of evaluation of the Victorian Wastewise program.

In small groups, participants were then asked to identify who they thought the key stakeholder groups are that need or would be interested in evaluation outcomes, and which outcomes they might be interested in.

We also asked participants to look at whether the stakeholders needing evaluation outcomes could be grouped together.

And we asked the groups, as they were discussing stakeholder groups, to identify any key issues relating to evaluation of environmental sustainability programs.

Stakeholder Groups in Evaluation

This activity threw up a wide range of identifiable stakeholders, which were somewhat different for each group, and would appear to be context specific.

However, in group discussion and in the plenary following this, it was possible to identify seven meta-scale stakeholder groups – see next section. The workshop was of the view that these seven groups might form a useful basis for formulating who to report to when evaluating programs. This in turn would assist the framing of the evaluation, if consideration was given to what stakeholders in these seven groups were interested in, or needed to know.

What Stakeholder Groups Had in Common

Following the first plenary, workshop participants returned to their groups to consider what stakeholder groups had in common, as well as continuing to identify key issues and insights around evaluation. This activity was tackled in various ways in the groups. One group decided to develop a grid of common interests, with Stakeholder meta-groups on one axis, and evaluation outcomes on the other. This approach was greeted with approval by the workshop participants at the second plenary. Following the workshop, the reports from each group was used to further develop this grid, which is attached to this report.

Key Issues and Insights for Evaluating Sustainability Programs

Throughout the two plenaries, a list of key issues and insights was generated – see attached list for details. Several consistent themes arising throughout the morning were:

We need to tailor evaluation outcomes to the variety of key stakeholders, which has implications for how evaluation needs to be best framed.

Evaluation is also based in what is of most value, and often this could be clearer, as well as who it is of value to, in many sustainability programs.

There is a need to investigate further how to bring together the social and environmental dimensions of sustainability programs, and how best to evaluate each of these dimensions.

Likewise there is a need to better understand how to recognise and document each of the key learning and change aspects of sustainability.

There is a sense that on-the-ground experience is not fully valued or well captured in many types of evaluation.

There is confusion over the usefulness and appropriateness of quantitative and qualitative information and methods of documentation, especially between stakeholders.

Evaluation needs to be developed in ways that integrate with program delivery, and minimise perceptions of over-evaluation.

Ways need to be found to link on-ground, specific evaluation that informs program delivery, with large-scale evaluation that informs policy and funding priorities.

OUTCOMES: STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS

Who are the key groups of stakeholders? – distilled from reports back from groups

<u>Stakeholders</u>	<u>Key Comments</u>
Audience	These are the people who take home the change How to frame this group may be somewhat different for business
Funders	Need to convince/clarify what key values are on which to base program and evaluation
Evaluators	Sometimes these are also implementers/facilitators - what should be the relationships between these?
Project Deliverers	Often have to move across a variety of roles and answer in evaluation to multiple other stakeholders Variable arrangements of financial controllers that affect what is valued and evaluated
Support Base (influencers)	Partners are numerous and very variable - they have influence in multiple and varied ways - they usually have interests beyond money/efficiency and can help to generate synergies (Note: there can also be negative influencers)
Agenda Setters/ Policy/Decision Makers	Often not well connected with, or in ongoing communication with other groups/ implementers
Lobby Groups/ Community Advocates	Important in helping to drive change

Notes:

These appear to be common broad stakeholder groups across many/most programs that may possibly be used to assist in framing evaluation

Each of the stakeholder groups have their own particular mix of what they expect, or need to know, out of evaluation.

However there are commonalities between stakeholder groups which may be drawn on to frame what is most important to evaluate – what these commonalities are may vary between programs.

Evaluation should attempt to address the interests of each of the above stakeholder groups; however resources and/or circumstances may not allow evaluation to effectively cover all stakeholder groups, so prioritising may be needed for particular programs. Nevertheless, looking at stakeholder interests beyond the immediate and obvious should be encouraged.

OUTCOMES: KEY ISSUES AND INSIGHTS

What is it that convinces others, and how should this influence evaluation; eg over focus on the 'quantitative' – also, how best to include the qualitative and convince 'them' (eg. funders) of the value of this

Programs are often more reactive than proactive – and short term rather than based on deep, long term change and associated evaluation.

How do we best value and document on ground knowing?

There is a multiplicity of players to address in evaluating most programs.

Sometimes / frequently to get programs to work, facilitators need to act outside of their formal roles – how can evaluation best capture this input and its effects.

How do we link together learning and action, and demonstrate the relationships through evaluation?

Importance of evaluating policy as well as programs – that is, evaluating up (how appropriate & useful is policy/strategic framework) as well as down/across.

Is there some type of framework overall for evaluation of sustainability programs?

Should we include in evaluation ways to address stakeholders who are negative in their outlook?

We need to develop more effective formative evaluation which both meets the needs of implementers and also targets other stakeholders.

We need to better understand how 'tonnes on seats' (specific quantitative outcomes) fits into overall evaluation, and is not over-emphasised.

How do we value and document actual learning and behaviour change – need better methodologies?

Good evaluation can help diffusion of best practice programs.

Large scale data is difficult to get (eg across regions, at a state level) without corresponding large program infrastructure (because programs tend to be context specific).

The organisational and physical infrastructure supporting programs needs documenting also in evaluation, as these have important impacts on program outcomes.

There is a fear of over-evaluation eg. surveyed-out.

Where possible, need to merge/integrate evaluation with delivery.

Evaluation will be based on what you value and what other stakeholders value, which can be different for different stakeholders.

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	Practitioners / Facilitators	Funders	Audiences / Participants	Adversaries	Influences (media/ parents/ lobby groups/ Advocacy Groups)	Future Beneficiaries	Evaluators	Communicators	Policy Makers	Others:			
										The Planet (Ecological Reps)	Community	Global Corps / Business	Taxpayers / Voters
Learning Improvements, Etc.	√√	√	√										
Profile / Kudos - advocacy - media	√	√√	√		√								
What Works? (Measurable)	√√								√√	√		√	
Expectations (Outputs vs Outcomes)	√	√	√						√				
Evaluation of best practice (tools)	√√	√							√				
Values – What's most important?	√	√	√						√	√		√	√
Encouraging of behaviour change?	√	√	√						√	√			
Measuring Progress?	√	√	√		√				√	√		√	√
Paradigm Reassessment	√				√				√				
Cost (money) Effectiveness?	√	√√√	√		√				√	√		√√√	√
Promotion of well-being	√		√√√		√					√√			√
Targets / Understanding Audience	√√	√	√√						√				
Is it Sustainable?													

3. Outcomes of the Sustainability Education Roundtable program – to be reported in the next Bulletin

- An evaluation of the whole program:
This will be an account of how participants and others felt about the value of the program
- Recommendations from the program for Sustainability education initiatives in Victoria
- Legacy project 1:
VAEE and friends are working to develop a proposal for ongoing consultation / facilitation of Sustainability Education... different from the Roundtable program just completed – but of direct relevance to VAEEs membership and VAEEs role as the umbrella organisation for Sustainability Education. This proposal will be in the final bulletin.
- Legacy project 2:
A proposal is being developed for an ongoing Think Tank group / a ginger group, hosted by CERES and Environment Victoria. This would be developed out of the Working Group and would canvass more radical and urgent actions for Sustainability Education. This proposal will be in the final bulletin.

4. Opportunities for feedback and comment.

Let us know what you think were the achievements of the 2 year Roundtable process. What improvements would you like to see reflected in Legacy 1 and Legacy 2 proposals? Email your comments to michelle@ceres.org.au

And a reminder for you/your organisation to commit to the 'Learning to Live Sustainably Strategy' process. Are you represented below? If not, would you like to contact Steve Malcolm (DSE), Stephen.Malcolm@dse.vic.gov.au / (03) 9637 9210

SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE (FEBRUARY 22, 2006)

COMMITMENTS

NAME	ORGANISATION	COMMITMENT
Liza Dale - Hallett	Museum Victoria Ph: 8341 7251 Email: ldale@museum.vic.gov.au	Create programs and promote water saving and creating sustainability (by continuing to locate examples of transformative learning from Aust./World), develop sustainability as a public goal within Museum Victoria.
Frank Mitchell	EPA / NCC Swinburne Ph: 9695 2705 Email: frank.mitchell@epa.vic.gov.au	Personal: Participate in 'planning' and 'implementation' activities. EPA: Support initiatives in various ways.
Philip Bachelor	NRCL Ph: 5962 9033 Email: pb@nrcl.org.au	Model sustainable practices. Disseminate information on sustainable practices.
Jeff Su	Gould League	Develop training programs to embed

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	Ph: 9532 0909 Email: jeffs@gould.edu.au	sustainability into core business practices other than CSR. Develop sustainable consumption education program.
Rachel Carlisle	Environment Victoria Ph: 9341 8107 Email: rachel@envict.org.au	Develop locality based sustainable education curriculum and courses. Develop more information about peak oil and how to 'power down'.
Teresa Day	VAEE Ph: 9349 1806 Email: tday@vae.vic.edu.au	Support, develop and connect 'the sector' to get the smart ways underway. Be a catalyst in developing and implementing the communication plan and quantify what is sustainability in the community.
Will Tait	Our Planet Enterprises Ph: 8300 0896 Email: jodieandwill@ourplanet.com.au	Personal: Set up a gathering to tell the sustainability story to the community. Our Planet Enterprises: Explore means for spreading business activities and 'products' (env. awareness) into 'other' communities.
Amaya Unzueta	Sustainable Living Foundation (SLF) Ph: 9249 1888 Email: info@slf.org.au	Continue to promote alternatives and ways for the public to know what we can do to live more sustainably (Sustainable Living Festival, the website, etc).
Doug Smith	Village Green Ph: 0418 559 908 Email: doug@villagegreen.com.au	To help develop process plans that will allow for implementation of the subject matter. Happy to help others if required.
Steve Meacher	NRCL Ph: 5962 9071 Email: education@nrcl.org.au	Move NRCL towards being more sustainable as an organisation in terms of energy use, resource use (paper and water) and waste reduction and recycling
Sarah Norton	Context Ph: 0423 984 304 Email: sarah.norton@context-pl.com.au	Identify opportunities where can give support. Follow up contracts made through RT. Share information about the Oli qualification and resources developed.
Jessica Baillie	Greening Australia Ph: 9450 5321 Email: jbaille@gavic.org.au	For schools: provide a sustainability contacts network list for teachers. Greening Australia: include indigenous sustainability knowledge in all practices and make knowledge available to staff.
Maria James	VCAA Ph: 9651 4655 Email:	Mapping of sustainability education outcomes to VELS in order that sustainability education is made

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	james.maria.m@edumail.vic.gov.au	evident to all members of school community, consideration on how teaching may be refined and that a whole-school approach to sustainability is encouraged.
Judith Alcorn	Least Waste Ph: 9874 4633 Email: Judith@leastwaste.com.au	Advocate the uptake of the smart ways by government and all the sectors. Facilitate the implementation of the smart ways into all sectors.
Tim Henman / Tim the Tankman	Shire of Yarra Ranges / Rainwater Tanks Ph: 9736 3036 Email: tim@timthetankman.com.au t.heenan@yarraranges.vic.gov.au	I want you to tell me how I can be of the greatest assistance to you!
Shelley Waldon	Zoos Victoria Ph: 9285 9341 Email: swaldon@zoo.org.au	Liaise with DSE and facilitate the implementation/inclusion of L2LS into our thinking and developing. Write and deliver curriculum via programs and professional development which incorporate the sustainability values.
Gabrielle Stannus	City of Melbourne Ph: 9658 8557 Email: gabsta@melbourne.vic.gov.au	Brief city sustainability team on the RT, especially local government smart ways. Develop sustainable living demonstration site. Write submissions to support smart ways.
Rose De La Cruz	Foundation Studies, Melbourne Uni Ph: 9348 7463 Email: rdelacruz@trinity.unimelb.edu.au	Through teaching, help raise awareness of the need for change in attitudes and behaviour. Develop a policy to make Melbourne Uni an environmentally sustainable place of teaching and learning.
Harry Van Moorst	Western Region Environment Centre Ph: 9731 0288 Email: harryvm@envirowest.org.au	Facilitate learning about sustainability, development of curricula for schools and PDs for teachers and Local Government, expertise in Ecological Footprint measurement, policy and strategy development on sustainability, and community organising (esp. in the West).
Vern Steele	Least Waste	Will influence the new Metro Political Waste Management Group to set up as a best practice sustainable organisation, as Vern is part of the reference committee.
Sue Gipson	EPA Victoria Ph: 8710 5513	Ongoing support to individual schools, council (Local Govt.) and teacher

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	Email: sue.gipson@epa.vic.gov.au	training. Promote Ecological Footprint as framework for sustainability at all levels in schools
Margot Finn	EPA Victoria Ph: 8710 5566 Email: margot.finn@epa.vic.gov.au	Consult with Director for an accurate summary of the whole organisation commitment. Continue commitment to develop and deliver quality school resources that assist teachers in their teaching of sustainability resources.
Rolf Freeman	Mornington Peninsula Shire Ph: 5950 1339 Email: rolf@mornpen@vic.gov.au	Actively work to achieve best practice in sustainability of MPSC infrastructure. Will include setting meaningful stretch targets for water/waste/energy consumption reduction for existing and new buildings, etc.
Richard Whately	Ph: 0418 116 066 / 9890 3208 Email: rwhately@bigpoond.net.au	Offer some time as a volunteer to organisations such as VAAE, to assist with sustainability education.
Rebecca Petit	Nilumbik Shire Council Ph: 9433 3216 Email: rebecca.petit@nilumbik.vic.gov.au	Promote the need for a sustainable change in all aspects of life (through community education programs, events). Work out internal and external ways in which all Government practices, facilities and culture are demonstrating and achieving meaningful targets, etc. (through eco-team) Constantly improve current actions to leave to sustainability change.
Kathy Overton	DSE Ph: 9412 4630 Email: kathy.overton@dse.vic.gov.au	Enhance partnerships, improve programs, and expand sustainability education programs within the organisation and agencies. Continue to lobby for organisational support for sustainability education.
Phillip Sutton	Sustainability Living Foundation Ph: 9486 4799 Email: phillip.sutton@green-innovations.asn.au	SLF & Green Innovations: Business innovation program. Community mobilisation; race to sustainability. SLF: Visioning for up to 5 million people. Green Innovations: Greenleap advocacy program around goals to achieve sustainability fast.
Robert Castleden	EcoSTEPS Ph: 9435 9868 / 0417 113 972	Support the transition to sustainability by offering training programs to

	Email: robertcastleden@ecosteps.com.au	businesses that demonstrate the necessity for personal / organisational/ community actions that support the planet, profit and people.
Eva Migdal	King David School Ph: 9507 2717 / 0402 017 327 Email: emigdal@optusnet.com.au	Create a working group of people who are involved in supporting/nurturing and educating in sustainable food systems and from this group create a Sustainable Food Systems Cluster which will be available to resource and support schools in numerous ways.
Colin Hocking	Victoria Uni Ph: 9919 2322 Email: colin.hocking@vu.edu.au	Put into action the Enviro-Social working group the Institute for Community Engagement of policy alternatives as a forum to bring together expertise and ideas in the University for planning, learning change and evaluation for sustainability.
Nick Towle	Cycle for Sustainability Ph: 0428 834 748 Email: nj_towle@inet.net.au	Engage with sustainable living foundation to promote community engagement and mobilisation.
Monique Conheady	Flo Carshare Ph: 0411 146 144 Email: monique@flo.net.au	Continue the discussion and expand on the ideas for a sustainability technology innovation program in particular in the areas of entrepreneurship, commercialisation, capitalisation and stimulating demand.
Eric Bottomley	CERES Ph: 9380 1556 Email: eric@ceres.org.au	To support all sustainability initiatives especially relating to schools and community education, active community projects, forefront of change initiatives, TBL projects ranging from organic foods, nursery, etc.

Contact:

For further information about the process or to discuss your ideas about direction contact:

Eric Bottomley (CERES)

eric@ceres.org.au,

9380 1556

Steve Malcolm (DSE)

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9637 9210

Frank Mitchell (Swinburne)

Frank.Mitchell@epa.vic.gov.au

9695 2705

Mike Hill (Roundtable Chair)

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9380 1459