



05/10/23

To whom it may concern,

We write in response to the Short Consultation Paper on the Tasmanian Sustainability Strategy. And we would like to register our interest in participating in further consultations.

We are the Australian Association for Environmental Education - Tasmanian Chapter (AAEE - Tas), a member of the national Australian Association for Environmental Education [AAEE – Australian Association for Environmental Education](#). AAEE- Tas's core goals are the promotion of education around sustainability and the environment in Tasmania and advocating for Education for Sustainability (EfS). Our members include professionals in the education sector, other state government employees, retirees, student teachers and members of NGOs. We liaise with groups and specialists including scientists, medical professionals, local government and state government departments, artists and others as required to assist AAEE-Tas in the cause of EfS. Our goals align with many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), including education about the sustainable use of resources, reducing the impact of climate change, improving human and ecosystem health, protecting biodiversity and reducing human impact on land and water. Our goals also align with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We are excited about the new comment from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No.26 which describes clearly children's right to be heard on the environment with a special focus on climate change. Similarly, changes to [Tasmania's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy It takes a Tasmanian Village 2021 \(amazonaws.com\)](#) (0- 25 yrs) to include an environmental outcome aligns well with AAEE-Tas' charter.

We would like to stress the important role of environmental education, formal and informal, in leading us towards a brighter future.

The Tasmanian Climate Change Action Plan 2023-2025 specifies that.

"Our children and young people will be involved in decisions about their future.

How: In collaboration with DECYP's Curriculum team, environment experts and other key teachers and student leaders we will work together to develop climate change resources for schools."

AAEE-Tas members continue to support the Youth Climate Leaders Program. We continue to work on improving the way we talk to children and young people to understand their needs as we act on climate change. We also work to understand how we can reduce the impacts of climate change on the mental health and wellbeing of Tasmanians, including children and young people.

We look forward to the full implementation of this goal. The children are our future, and we have a responsibility to ensure that they are informed and have input. Student leaders for climate change are seriously concerned about the impacts of biodiversity loss and climate change on their future health, and this should continue to be identified in both the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and Sustainability Strategy.

The Australian Curriculum has Sustainability as a Cross-curriculum priority, however teachers in the formal education system carry a huge load to meet all 'compulsory' areas of the curriculum. We fear that sustainability is falling by the wayside as reporting requirements for sustainability are less stringent. We see an urgent need to re-inject hands-on sustainability and environmental education for pre-service teachers at UTAS, and students engaged in Tas TAFE Working with Children courses, as a prelude to working with Tasmania's youngest children and their families in Children's Services and Child and Family Learning Centres in these pressing times. Also, more accessible and supported Professional Development for current and future teachers in sustainability **as outlined in Tasmania's Climate Action Plan 2023 – 2025**

**More public education programs** *Action:1.2 Tasmanians will have improved access to resources about climate change and skills training in key industries through a public education program.*

We argue for increasing support for all Tasmanian learners, state-wide to access EfS through improved resourcing for DECYP's Sustainability Learning Centre and closer collaboration with relevant government departments. Eco-anxiety and decreasing opportunities to connect with nature is increasingly impacting the personal wellbeing of Tasmania's young people. In order to understand environmental sustainability, the Tasmanian education system needs to provide opportunities for young people to learn with more contact with nature and to ensure their right to "access to the outdoors and green spaces" [\*Tasmania's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy It takes a Tasmanian Village 2021 \(amazonaws.com\)\*](#) pg 14. Young people need authentic opportunities to advocate and become agents of change through more innovative and responsive, student directed, cross curricular learning programs. (See Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2023-2025.)

### **Public education program**

***Action 1.4 Our children and young people will be empowered to shape their future. We look forward to assisting with the development and delivery of climate change resources for schools as indicated in Action 1.4: to build a generation of young Tasmanians who are critical thinkers, involved in exploring and understanding the science of climate change, its causes and solutions, and how society and our economy will need to build resilience and adapt to its impacts.***

Between 2009 - 2019, AAEE -Tas members volunteered as mentors, first for DoE's state-wide, Kids for Kids Sustainability Conferences facilitated by the Sustainability Learning Centre. From 2019 members have engaged with the Tasmanian Youth Climate Leaders program as student mentors - all part of Action 1.4 which also falls under the [Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy: It Takes a Tasmanian Village](#).

For the Tasmanian Action plan to further leverage schools and their communities' engagement, student advocacy & agency should be harnessed by implementing and funding a state-wide schools sustainability program akin to Tasmania's highly successful Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative - Tas (AuSSI-Tas 2009 -2012) which engaged 190+ schools state-wide. This can be achieved by adopting or adapting Victoria's Resource Smart schools' program which: "assists schools to embed sustainability in everything they do. The ResourceSmart Schools program provides practical support to schools to reduce resource use, make cost savings, integrate sustainability into the curriculum and share learnings beyond the school gate." [About ResourceSmart Schools | Sustainability Victoria](#).

ResourceSmart Schools is a partnership model supporting SDG 17 whereby state government, local government, and environment groups such as Natural Resource Management work together to deliver the program, tailoring it to each school community's needs, through the development of a school environment/sustainability management plan.

Contextualised, local knowledge is key to Action 1.4 and it would be terrific to have access to real time Tasmanian data through an online portal where all Tasmanians could view Tasmania's:

- energy network & production, distribution, consumption, pricing
- water resources: networks, water levels, usage, costs, income, water quality
- waste data
- whole of government carbon accounting: carbon emissions
- how agencies are tracking against the UNSDG's
- state legislation and links to relevant state departments & agencies
- awareness raising about ways children's voices can be heard through the Premier's Advisory Board and the Children's Commissioners Council
- establishment and promotion of circular economy linkages - rethinking govt cleaning contracts to ensure sustainable practices (waste separation; recycling compost/FOGO etc) are part of the cleaning contracts.
- establishment of food gardens, pollination gardens etc incorporated into govt builds or existing buildings, (roof tops etc) and utilising compost/FOGO from the site
- development of sustainability education resources in collaboration with the DECYP's Curriculum team, Aboriginal Education Services, the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, Sustainability Learning Centre staff and students
- access to state, national and international education resources
- intergovernmental reference group to assist with developing a database of resources for sharing or redistribution, i.e., reuse of resources from office upgrades, rehousing, building deconstruction etc, Govt Fleet: ride sharing
- links to other agencies, NGO's etc.
- sustainability initiatives grant scheme for schools & communities.

Outside the formal education system, there are numerous opportunities to harness citizen goodwill, encourage enthusiasm for environmental activities and push behaviour change in a more sustainable direction through more public education programs.

*Action: 1.2 Tasmanians will have improved access to resources about climate change and skills training in key industries through a public education program where partnerships could be developed with the following grassroots organisations:*

Organisations such as Repair Cafes, Tip Shops, Neighbourhood Houses that coordinate bike kitchens, garden co-ops, food distribution and skills cafes, festival organisers and NGO's such as AAEE -Tas, Burnie's RESEED, Sustainable Living Tasmania and Resource Work Cooperative have the ability to teach people about environmental issues in practical ways: to build capacity and resilience. These organisations need financial support so they can provide more educational opportunities and guide people to be more sustainable.

Stop Food Waste Australia is about to launch a national behaviour change campaign to reduce household food waste. The State Government could easily capitalise on such waste reduction campaigns in the form of supplementary funding and other supports. We saw how potent the ABC program 'War on Waste' was: it brought about marked and palpable interest and concern for waste issues. The ABC has documented this success.

We are excited for the much-anticipated introduction of Tasmania's Container Refund scheme and look forward to assisting with the state-wide education program to support its uptake.

We must create new norms in acceptance of solar and wind energy and electric car uptake. And walking or cycling or using public transport. Education is vital in promoting such monumental changes.

We recommend that in order for the government to be seen as a leader in climate change/sustainability and biodiversity action, a positive strategy with specific and measurable targets for actions is critical.

We hope you can consider our request to have EfS and the UNSDG's at the forefront of any strategy to make Tasmania more sustainable. We believe that providing opportunities to change attitudes and behaviours towards our environment is vital to a sustainable future.

We commend the government on its initiative and look forward to AAEE-Tas value adding to it through further consultation and on-ground events.

As aforementioned, please register our interest in participating in further consultations.

Kind regards,

A square image showing a handwritten signature in blue ink on a textured, grey background. The signature appears to be 'Ingrid Albion'.

Ingrid Albion

Convenor  
on behalf of Australian Association for Environmental Education  
(AAEE – Tas)