



Australian Government

Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts



Coastal Management Education: Making it more effective

A report and interactive web tool for assessing the effectiveness of coastal management education and capacity building programs.



How effective is your coastal management program?



Capacity building of stakeholders is critical to achieve effective coastal management and protection of coastal resources

(DEWHA 2006)



**Education for Sustainability
– A new approach**

Education for Sustainability motivates, equips and involves individuals and groups in moving towards a more sustainable world. Education for Sustainability consists of active participation in learning and engaging people in change. (for more information go to www.aries.mq.edu.au/portal)

Source: UQBS Project Report

This brochure outlines the findings of research undertaken by the Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability (ARIES). The research investigated the effectiveness of current coastal education and capacity building programs and considered how coastal practitioners can improve the effectiveness of both their existing programs and new initiatives.

The research has resulted in a report of findings [available at www.aries.mq.edu.au] and an interactive web tool [go to www.aries.edu.au]. The tool and report are aimed at all coastal practitioners, including planners, managers and educators, who use educational or capacity building techniques to encourage change towards improved outcomes for our coasts. Potential users of the tool may include local government staff, non-government organisations, industry associations, the formal education sector, natural resource managers - in short, anyone involved in coastal management education.

The research was undertaken to support the *National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management: Framework and Implementation Plan*¹ published by DEW in 2006. This document identified capacity building and education as one of its priority areas for national collaboration.

The report contains:

- ◆ a **review of case studies and experiences** in coastal management education from both Australia and internationally
- ◆ a discussion of the **current role and provision of education** in coastal management
- ◆ an **'Education for Sustainability' approach** to coastal management education that offers an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of programs
- ◆ a **model** for assessing coastal management education programs.

Key findings and opportunities

The research identified that whilst there are some good examples of education programs being undertaken across Australia, many others remain heavily focused solely on awareness raising or engaging participants in on-ground activities. Although these programs can increase learners' knowledge and skills to address coastal management issues over the short term, the findings suggest that a more profound, learner-centred approach is required if we are to achieve and sustain change in how our coasts are managed over the long term.

The report outlines a number of suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of existing programs using an 'Education for Sustainability' approach including:

- ◆ **Increase participation in defining issues and developing solutions.** Many existing programs tend to be dominated by an information giving approach, i.e. education *about* the coast or coastal management. Whilst this is important, research shows that change in actions is more effectively achieved through giving participants the opportunity to discuss and reflect on issues and to develop solutions in a participatory way.
- ◆ **Develop positive visions for the future.** Many programs tend to dwell on the past and whilst it is important to learn from past experiences, there is a need for programs to focus more positively on the future in order to increase motivation for change.

¹*National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management: Framework and Implementation Plan* Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, Commonwealth of Australia (2006), ISBN: 0642550514 - www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/framework/index.html

- ◆ **Critically question the root causes of issues and seek longer term outcomes.** Many existing programs have an 'end of pipe' focus. This can fail to address underlying root causes of problems and hence fail to seek longer term, sustainable change, e.g. seeking long term prevention of damage to dunes through changes in human actions rather than the shorter term outcome of dune restoration works.
- ◆ **Incorporate learning as a primary objective into existing coastal management networks.** Many coastal management networks do not have learning as a primary goal or initiative. There are many opportunities to increase dialogue and learning amongst coastal management practitioners using these existing networks.



More in-depth information and further recommendations are contained in the full report which is available for download at www.aries.mq.edu.au.



The Interactive Web Tool – An Assessment Model for Coastal Managers and Educators

Go to www.aries.edu.au to start using the tool.

As part of the research project an interactive assessment tool has been developed. The tool can be used to assess and/or develop a full range of coastal management education programs, for example designing a coastal management lecture series, water quality monitoring program, school based program or professional training program.

The tool seeks to help coastal managers and educators to:

- ◆ Assess the effectiveness of their existing education programs, and
- ◆ Design and implement future programs that more effectively contribute to change towards sustainability in coastal management in Australia.

To do this, the assessment tool uses an Education for Sustainability framework, an innovative approach to environmental education and capacity building for sustainability. For more information on EfS visit www.aries.mq.edu.au/portal.

The tool takes the user through a series of steps.

1. **Program Type** - Users are assisted to identify their program type based on what their program is trying to achieve.
2. **Program Effectiveness** - A series of questions are used to assess their program against a number of 'key factors' in effective coastal management education programs. These factors are based on an Education for Sustainability approach.
3. **Action Planning** – Suggestions are made for possible ways of improving their existing program or improving the design of a new program.
4. **Resources** - The tool offers a selection of resources to assist educators in the successful design and development of their programs including:
 - Case studies of effective practice
 - Reference materials on Education for Sustainability
 - Links to relevant coastal websites, educational materials and toolkits.

This tool is available at www.aries.edu.au and we appreciate any feedback or ideas.



Education for Sustainable Development is an emerging but dynamic concept that encompasses a new vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future.

(UNESCO 2002)



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Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Government or the Minister for the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

