North Coast TAFE ecological sustainability policy

Purpose and scope

We at North Coast TAFE are committed to fulfilling our responsibilities to ecological sustainability (ES) both locally and globally.

For the purpose of this policy ‘North Coast TAFE’ refers to all assets, activities, students, staff and persons operating on our organisations behalf.

This policy provides a framework for the future direction of ES within North Coast TAFE. ‘Environment Plan 2002 and beyond’ provided a platform for our work towards sustainability. This policy provides a vehicle for continuous improvement, to add to our history of achievements in this area.

This policy supports North Coast TAFE’s Charter “to provide personalised vocational education and training to build prosperity, sustainability and innovation”.

This policy is supported by an ES strategic plan that:

- assists staff to meet our legislative requirements in terms of environmental protection
- equips students to achieve sustainability competencies
- rewards ecologically sustainable practices
- promotes continuous improvement; and
- integrates ecological sustainability into the planning, curriculum, management and operations of North Coast TAFE so the approach is systemic.

This policy also lends support to other policies, plans and legislation that impact on our activities. These include the NSW State Plan, NSW Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy (WRAPP), NSW Government Energy Management Policy (GEMP) Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO Act), NSW DET Ecological Sustainability Cross Portfolio Plan and Learning for Sustainability - NSW Environmental Education Plan 2007-2010.

Responsibilities

The intent and practices of this policy lie with all students, staff and persons operating on behalf of North Coast TAFE. ES considerations are to be incorporated into the plans and practices undertaken by every individual within our work and learning environment.

An increased level of accountability lies with individuals responsible for the planning or management of North Coast TAFE activities such as Unit, Campus and Faculty Managers. All business processes need to contribute to our Charter’s strategic outcomes, which include: “Our students achieve sustainability competencies” and “Our practices are ecologically sustainable”. Progress against these will be measured annually.
The Institute Executive is ultimately accountable for ensuring the policy’s implementation, providing resources for implementation and ensuring continuous improvement in this area. Monitoring of energy use, waste management and sustainable procurement occurs through mandatory GEMP and WRAPP reporting. Responsibility for coordinating monitoring and reporting mechanisms lies with Project Manager Ecological Sustainability Initiatives. This includes TAFE reporting such as North Coast TAFE’s Annual Report and other policy commitments such as GEMP, WRAPP, and Learning for Sustainability for example.

**Our commitment and response**

Ecological sustainability (ES) is the restoration and preservation of the ecological processes on which all life depends.

North Coast TAFE has accepted this definition in recognition of our responsibility and our capacity to not only operate in accordance with ES, but also help others (individuals, communities, enterprises) in the region learn how they can do the same. In this the 'Decade of Education for Sustainable Development' (DESD) 2005-2014, governments from around the world have been invited to strengthen their contribution to sustainability through a focus on education. This policy supports the Australian Government’s Implementation Strategy. The North Coast of NSW is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, and is home to ecologically significant natural environments ranging from pristine beaches and sub-tropical rainforest to lush mountainsides. The scale and diversity of assets and operations under the auspices of North Coast TAFE lends to a significant responsibility to this local environment and the wider global environment.

To meet our responsibility we are committed to:

The efficient use of natural resources in our operations. We will:

- avoid or minimise resource use;
- maximise efficiency and effectiveness of resources used, including recycling products where possible;
- assess life cycle impacts of products; and
- where possible ecological risk exists - exercise caution to avoid harm.

Natural resources include, but are not limited to land use, energy and fuels, water, biological and mineral resources.

Increasing the ES of local communities by:

- promoting best practice to local business and industry;
- providing students with the skills and knowledge required to take ES into their workplaces and communities;
- fostering a culture of ES in all we do; and
• being a role model in relation to facilities design, asset management and operations.

The key mechanisms for implementation of this policy are through:

• North Coast TAFE’s strategic improvement area 7 (2007-2010) "Educate for and practise ecological sustainability"
• the requirement that all North Coast TAFE business processes contribute to strategic outcomes: "Our students achieve sustainability competencies" and "Our practices are ecologically sustainable"

North Coast TAFE's Ecological Sustainability Plan and Project Teams.