

STRATEGIC PLAN

Western Rivers

Environmental Education Network

(WREEN)



An Australian Association for Environmental Education NSW Chapter (AAEE NSW) project supported by the NSW Government's Environmental Trust

working for sustainability



Background

This Strategic Plan has been created as part of the AAEE NSW 'Equipping Regional Sustainability Education Networks for Creating Change' Project 2016- 2018.

The aim of this project was to increase the capacity and effectiveness of the Regional Sustainability Education Networks (RSENs) operating across rural, regional and metropolitan NSW.

The project is one big step in the implementation of *Make the Change: A Framework for Education and Engagement for Sustainability 2014-2021* which was developed by AAEE NSW in partnership with NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH).

The principles and themes in this Strategic Plan have been guided by *Make the Change: A Framework for Education and Engagement for Sustainability 2014-2021*, the *Make the Change Framework Sector Guides* and the Terms of Reference of the Northern Sydney Environmental Education Network (NSEEN) and Southern Sydney Sustainability Education Network (SSEEN).

Both AAEE NSW members and RSEN members have been consulted on the creation of this Plan.



WESTERN RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (WREEN) STRATEGIC PLAN 2017- 2020

VISION

Educators from different organisations and sectors collaborating to undertake best practice sustainability education and engagement for our region's communities and environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

Working together and communicating regularly on projects whilst supporting each other and encouraging best practice sustainability education and engagement.

ETHOS

Network members:

1. Agree to take an active role in making our network supportive, fun and successful;
2. Acknowledge that our network has no formal leadership roles and that we all share the responsibility to lead collaboratively;
3. Share information about their projects both at and between meetings in an open and transparent manner;
4. Find opportunities to collaborate with each other and sector-based networks in their projects.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following values, beliefs and ideas guide our network when making a decision or considering a matter:

1. Best practice sustainability education and engagement projects (where possible):
 - a. Share the values of sustainability - defined as 'balancing the community's economic and social needs within the planet's ecological limits';
 - b. Encourage the community to be active citizens in caring for our environment;
 - c. Respect and reflect local Aboriginal culture and heritage and include cultural and place-based learning;
 - d. Reflect and address the needs of target audience and engage these participants through critical thinking, problem solving and action;
 - e. Have reflection, monitoring and evaluation built into their design, to allow for continuous improvement;
 - f. Are achieved through the collaborative efforts of multiple partners from different organisations and sectors.
2. WREEN endorses 'Make the Change: A Framework for education and engagement for environmental sustainability 2014- 2021' and is committed to using the framework (where possible) to help achieve our vision;
3. WREEN acknowledges the support provided by the Australian Association for Environmental Education NSW Chapter (AAEE NSW) and will work with them to enhance sustainability education and engagement across our region.

GOALS/ OBJECTIVES

1. Increase communication and collaboration between network members;
2. Increase our membership numbers and increase the number of sectors that are represented by our members; and
3. Hold quarterly meetings, with at least one meeting per year including a social gathering.

EVALUATION

This is how the network will measure if it is achieving its goals/objectives:

1. Annually invite all members to comment on the purpose and administration of the network to identify areas for change/improvement to meet network goals and member needs;
2. Contribute (where possible) to the AAEE NSW annual state-wide RSEN evaluation, by providing data on the following outcomes:
 - a. Meeting frequency and attendance numbers;
 - b. Number of members and number of sectors represented; and
 - c. Projects worked on and other indicators of collaboration within the network.

MEMBERSHIP*

1. WREEN is for educators from western NSW, which is geographically bounded by the great western flowing rivers with the Barwon River in the north, Lachlan River in the south, Macquarie River in the east, and the Darling River in the West.
2. Sustainability educators/facilitators from all sectors are welcome to become members of WREEN.

These sectors include (but are not limited to); Aboriginal communities; agriculture & primary industries; business; community & environment groups; culturally & linguistically diverse (CALD) communities; early childhood; local government; natural resource management; school education; state government; TAFE; waste education- local government; waste industry; and youth engagement.

3. Those who have an interest in this region (even if they don't reside within it) may also become members of WREEN.
4. Sector-based sustainability educator networks are welcome to become members of WREEN;
5. Membership is free and must be approved by the Convenor.

ADMINISTRATION / ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Convenor
 - a. Nominated by the members of the Network and rotated every twelve (12) months or at a time as determined as suitable by the Network;
 - b. Acts as a point of contact for the Network, including being the designated media spokesperson;
 - c. Administers Network membership, including membership to any relevant newsletters or Network social media sites, maintains the Network contact list/database;
 - d. Maintains the Network webpage on the AAEE NSW website;

- e. Organises a voluntary Chair for each meeting and provides the Chair with an updated Network membership list;
- f. Provides any relevant Network updates at scheduled meetings;
- g. Identifies upcoming funding opportunities for the Network and ensures any funding applied for under the Network adheres to its vision and values, including referring to the Make the Change: A Framework for education and engagement for environmental sustainability 2014- 2021 and acknowledging the support provided by AAEE NSW; and
- h. Organises an annual review (e.g. simple survey) of the Network's effectiveness in building the capacity of its members to adopt best practice sustainability education and engagement, including identifying achievements, barriers and opportunities. A brief summary report is to be provided to network members.

2. Meeting Chair:

- a. Nominated on a voluntary basis by a Network member, approved by the Convenor, and rotated every meeting;
- b. Organises the meeting date, time and venue (including tea/coffee/biscuits) in consultation with the Convenor. Utilises 'sustainable meeting' principles if possible;
- c. Calls for agenda items and organises any key note presentations or activities;
- d. Emails meeting invitations (including final agenda) to network members;
- e. Organises minute taker and emails meeting minutes to network members; and
- f. Organises location for a social gathering (if relevant and at cost to members).

3. Members:

- a. Willingly commit to the Strategic Plan Terms of Reference set out by the Network, including its vision, ethos and guiding principles;
- b. Actively participate in Network meetings and notify Meeting Chair at least two (2) days prior to a scheduled meeting if unable to attend;
- c. Send any agenda items to the Meeting Chair as requested and in a timely manner;
- d. Endeavour to share information about their projects, and opportunities for collaboration, at and in between meetings in an open and transparent manner;
- e. In sharing or promoting any information to the Network, particularly business, product or service related, include the following Disclaimer on all correspondence:
 - *This (INSERT document type) is intended for members of the Western Rivers Environmental Education Network (WREEN) and as information only. There is no intention to endorse this business, product or service over any others in the marketplace, but rather to relay the information in the best interests of all those who work in the field of Environmental Education.*
- f. Display courtesy and respect at all times, including turning mobile phones off when in meetings and listening to what other group members have to say;
- g. Participate in annual Network review coordinated by Convenor, including providing feedback on Network achievements, opportunities and barriers;
- h. Report back to their organisation or group on the Network's progress as required;
- i. Participate in Network promotion, celebratory and social events where possible;
- j. Consider the Network when formulating submissions and policies which lobby for best practice sustainability education and engagement; and
- k. Actively support and learn from other RSEN or change advocates in this field.

4. Meetings:

- a. Meetings will be 1-2 hours long and held quarterly, with at least one meeting per year including a social gathering;
- b. Meetings may be held using 'online meeting room' technology provided by AAEE NSW, to avoid travel time and embrace members who are not centrally located;
- c. Meetings will be rotating, and coordinated by a different Meeting Chair each time on a voluntary basis;
- d. Agenda items to include meeting open, acknowledgement of country, apologies, confirmation of previous minutes and matters arising, specific items varying from meeting to meeting (e.g. member updates, future projects/activities, funding), review of relevant meeting actions or follow up requirements, and formal close;
- e. Decisions at a meeting will be completed by show of hands and the decision will be based on the majority of votes. A quorum of four (4) including the Convenor or Meeting Chair will be required for voting. Voting can also take place via email, web or phone; and
- f. Meeting minutes will be recorded and made available to Network members and other interested parties (e.g. AAEE NSW) upon request.

REVIEW

1. This Strategic Plan will be subject to a review every two (2) years, with the next review due in April 2019.
2. The Plan will be reviewed by a panel of at least four (4) Network members and tabled for adoption at a Network meeting.

THIS STRATEGIC PLAN HAS BEEN DEVELOPED WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING NETWORK MEMBERS:

- Andy McQuie (NSW Office of Environment and Heritage)
- Catriona Jennings (Dubbo Regional Council)
- Alison Thompson (Bathurst Regional Council)
- Sally Neaves (Rahamim Ecology Centre)
- Nicholas Hall (Red Hill Environmental Education Centre)