Environmental Education Grants Program Tier 2 Guidelines – 2019

NSW Environmental Trust

environment.nsw.gov.au
Contents

Part 1: About the program 2
   Who we are 2
   What the program is about 2
   A new program direction 2
   What’s new for 2019 3
   Important dates and milestones 4
   Contact Us 5

Part 2: Eligibility 5
   Who can apply? 5
   Lead applicant 5
   Collaborators 6
   Nominating an administrator 6
   Ineligible applicants 6
   Consideration of past performance 6

Part 3: What can be funded? 7
   Guiding principles of environmental education projects 7
   Target audience 8
   What the Environmental Trust will not fund 8

Part 4: Application process – Tier 2 10
   How to apply: Stage 1 – Expression of Interest 10
   How to apply: Stage 2 – Full application (by invitation only) 10
   Assessment 11
   Stage 1: EOI assessment criteria 11
   Stage 2: Full application assessment criteria (by invitation only) 12
   Timeline of assessment process 13
   Technical Review Committee 13

Part 5: Managing your grant 14
   During your project 14
   Completing your project 15
   General obligations 15
   Privacy 15

Appendix 1 16
   The theoretical framework behind the new Trust Grants Program 16
   Theory of change 17
   More about the system and its influence on practice 18
Part 1: About the program

Closing date for expressions of interest: 3pm, Monday 5 August 2019

Who we are
The NSW Environmental Trust (the Trust) is an independent statutory body established by the NSW Government to fund a broad range of organisations to undertake projects that enhance the State’s environment. The Trust’s main responsibility is to make and supervise the expenditure of grants.

The Trust is currently administered by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE).

What the program is about
The Environmental Education Grants Program is a contestable grants program aiming to support educational projects that develop, broaden and transform the community’s knowledge, skills, and intrinsic motivation to undertake sustainable behaviour and encourage participation in the protection of the environment.

The objectives of the program are to:

- facilitate change in the values and behaviour of individuals and groups to improve specific or broad environmental problems
- develop and promote education projects that improve the environment and address sustainability challenges.

A new program direction
The Environmental Education Grants Program was evaluated in 2017–18. The evaluation found that the program is well regarded, efficiently managed within the Trust and addresses a market gap. The evaluation also found that the program could be adjusted to reflect contemporary best practice environmental education which incorporates transformative learning for sustainability principles and practices. These adjustments include (but are not limited to):

- incorporating value-based engagement methods that seek to engage with the target audience’s intrinsic values, worldviews and motivators, with the view of achieving longer term transformative changes in behaviour and practice
- developing a clear program logic to communicate how funded projects contribute to longer term transformative learning, behaviour and practice
- providing additional support to both prospective applicants and funded projects in both the development of their project, and the ongoing management of their project
- refining project indicators to fewer but more meaningful measures
- staging the implementation of the program.

The Trust has considered all recommendations from the evaluation and where practical, these will be gradually phased in over the next few years.
Transformative learning for Sustainability

‘Transformative learning is about eliciting changes in the identity of the learner’...through motivation, practice and feedback. It is about challenging underlying beliefs and frames of reference about an attitude and world belief, through critical reflection, open discourse and implementing new understandings into practice.’

What’s new for 2019

Changes to the funding structure

The Environmental Education Program will be delivered through two funding tiers to provide opportunities for different types of projects and allow for further innovation in the latest methods of education. Funding is no longer split between separate Community and Government streams. All eligible groups (see Part 2: Eligibility) can now apply to either funding tier.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding tier</th>
<th>Total annual allocation for the 2019 round</th>
<th>Funding amount per project</th>
<th>Project timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>up to $60,000</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>from $60,001 to $250,000</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanation of funding tiers

Tier 1

Tier 1 will fund grants of up to $60,000 for projects running for two to three years. This tier is best suited towards implementing local projects that address a specific issue. Tier 1 projects are expected to be similar in nature and scope to the projects run under the past Environmental Education Grants Program. However, projects are now expected to:

- engage with target groups in the development stage
- move beyond ‘workshops and educational materials’ towards engaging and experiential activities
- allow for innovative ideas and adaptive management
- measure and report on the rate of participation and satisfaction by target groups
- provide qualitative and quantitative evidence of the differences they have made to environments and/or human/organisational practices.

For further information on Tier 1, including instructions for applying, refer to the Tier 1 Program Guide.


Tier 2

Tier 2 will fund grants of between $60,001 and $250,000 for projects running from three to five years.

This grant stream follows a new approach intended to enable emerging contemporary thinking in the design of solutions to difficult environmental problems.

Projects are expected to:

- address the systemic causes of problems
- include social research or co-design in project development to ensure solutions are carefully targeted to the practical realities of people’s lives
- move beyond the formula of ‘workshops and educational materials’ towards engaging, experiential, personally transformative or agency-building activities
- take risks and trial innovative ideas
- conduct small scale field tests, prototyping, or piloting of ideas, and then amend project plans based on learnings, prior to full implementation
- leave a sustained legacy in environments/systems that assist long-term shifts in human/organisational behaviours
- measure and report on the impact on the environmental problem they are tackling, as well as changes to organisational/human systems and environments.

An important outcome will be transformations in thinking and assumptions by the project teams themselves, so that they understand and appreciate the process their target audience is expected to go through.

Grantees will work with Trust Administration and leading environmental education and behaviour change experts for up to 12 months investigating and planning their projects in line with these expectations, before implementing projects over the following two to four years.

Tier 2 applicants are strongly encouraged to read and consider Appendix 1 (The theoretical framework behind the new Trust Grants Program) before applying.

**Important dates and milestones**

The program has a two-stage application process, as outlined below. For more information about the application and assessment processes, go to Part 4: Application process – Tier 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of Interest (EOI)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Monday, 1 July 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>3pm, Monday, 5 August 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Application (by invitation only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Monday, 16 September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>3pm Monday, 21 October 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement of successful grant projects</td>
<td>January–February 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact us
If you require assistance at any stage or have questions regarding this guide, please contact the Trust on 02 8837 6093 or at info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au.

Part 2: Eligibility

Who can apply?
To be eligible proposals must have a lead applicant and collaborators. Lead applicants must follow the guiding principles for defining their collaborations (see Guiding principles of environmental education projects) and consider the assessment criteria for their engagement of collaborators (see Criterion 3, Stage 1: EOI assessment criteria). The eligibility criteria for lead applicants and your collaborators are outlined below.

Lead applicant
Each proposal requires a lead applicant. A maximum of 2 EOIs can be submitted for the Tier 2 funding stream. However, only one project may be funded.

If successful in securing a grant, the lead applicant will hold primary responsibility for delivery of the project. This includes administration and finance requirements, and performance of your collaborators.

The following organisations are eligible to apply as the lead applicant:

- Community organisations
- Community groups
- Incorporated associations
- Incorporated non-profit organisations
- Non-commercial cooperatives
- State government agencies and/or statutory committees
- Local councils
- Local Land Services
- Universities
- Regional organisations of councils
- Other local government-controlled organisations
- NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- Registered NSW Aboriginal Corporations
Collaborators
Collaborators are your key project partners. Collaborators will assist you to reach and target the primary and secondary audiences you have identified. They also provide a valuable source of expertise and skills to ensure the long-term success of your project (sustained behaviour change). It is vital that you engage and collaborate with other relevant stakeholders in your project design and delivery. Therefore, to be eligible, proposals (EOIs and invited applications) must show how collaborators will be involved in the project.

Note that at the EOI stage you will only need to indicate that collaborators have been contacted and that they show a willingness to collaborate. However, if you are invited to submit a full application, you will need to provide written confirmation expressing the commitment offered by each of your collaborators.

Collaborators can also help leverage time, expertise, material, resources, and reduce duplication. Your collaborators must:

- be actively involved in designing your project
- have, and can show, the requisite capabilities and responsibilities to help to deliver your project.

Collaborators might include state government agencies, schools, universities, councils, non-government organisations, Aboriginal organisations, community groups, landholders, environment groups or industry groups.

Nominating an administrator
Groups/organisations may nominate another organisation to administer grant funds on their behalf.

The administrator must be a legal entity and grant agreements are prepared in the name of the administering body. Grant payments are made payable to the administrator who is responsible for dispersing funds on the grantee’s behalf and the preparation of financial reports. An agreement should be reached between the grantee and the administrator in relation to project management. It is expected that the actual project implementation will be led by the applicant, and not the administrator.

Ineligible applicants
Under this program, the following are not eligible to apply for funding:

- individuals
- industry joint ventures
- profit-distributing corporations.

Consideration of past performance
Please note that the Trust will take into consideration past poor performance in respect of previous Trust funded projects, or any history of non-compliance with statutory or regulatory obligations when assessing eligibility.

If it is considered that negative past performance presents a substantial risk to the timely and effective performance of the project, an applicant will be asked to respond to the negative determination. This response will be taken into consideration alongside the overall merits of the EOI. Special conditions may be included in the grant agreement to address any issues of concern.
Part 3: What can be funded?

Guiding principles of environmental education projects

EOIs and applications should incorporate the following principles for effective and impactful environmental and/or sustainability education projects. These principles are also reflected in the assessment criteria (see Assessment).

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1** Guiding principles of environmental education projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the environmental problem you are addressing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand and clearly demonstrate the <strong>theory of change</strong> underlying your project (i.e. how your project proposal will improve the environmental problem).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look beyond the traditional focus on single behaviours to broader approaches considering practices, values, worldviews, and changes in organisations and institutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know your target audience (e.g. Who are they? Where are they located?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore and build evidence of your target audience needs (e.g. what are their typical behaviours, characteristics, values, and worldviews).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand appropriate ways to engage and educate your audience to inform your project design and delivery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify relevant collaborators (or partners).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish how collaborators can add value to the scoping, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of your project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborators can help leverage time, expertise, material, resources and reduce duplication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider how you will enhance the skills and capacity of your target audience or collaborators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building and training is integral in developing sustained behaviour and skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation and dissemination

- Consider how you will reflect, monitor and evaluate your project to:

  - Measure the success of your project (i.e. have changes occurred in the practices of your target audience that will result in an environmental outcome?)
  
  - Ensure continuous improvement based on findings.
  
  - Share education and engagement outcomes (e.g. approaches, tools, resources).

Target audience

The target audience will be the key beneficiary of your project activities. The Trust is seeking:

- projects where there are opportunities or challenges in engaging audiences to understand, care and act differently for our environment
- projects that apply innovative approaches to educate and engage their audiences
- target audiences that must be able to improve the identified local environmental problem or be able to engage with those that can.

When selecting a target audience, you should carefully consider a community’s characteristics including geographic location, socio-economic status, specific needs, drivers, or interests.

Note: The Trust uses a merit-based assessment process for all applications, so does not allocate specific funding for specific areas or regions of the State. However, in recognition of the historically low allocation of education program grants to regional areas, we strongly encourage applications from regional and rural communities, or projects that incorporate regional collaborations or partnerships.

Tier 2 applicants are strongly encouraged to read and consider Appendix 1 (The theoretical framework behind the new Trust Grants Program) before applying.

What the Environmental Trust will not fund

The following activities are not eligible for funding:

- Projects that, in the normal course of events, are clearly the core business of local or state government authorities or educational institutions.
- Continuing administration/operational costs of organisations.
- Capital equipment purchases, unless it is more cost effective to purchase than to lease capital equipment for the life of the project. Costs for capital items should generally not exceed 20% of the total project budget.
- One-off information activities and events (projects that will not lead [or contribute to] sustained change in behaviour and skills).
- Projects that fund devolved grants (i.e. projects offering grants to other organisations).

‘Core business’ can be difficult to define as it varies for different organisations.

Generally, core business is essential business or legal responsibility of an organisation. The Trust will consider funding works that are related to core business but additional to the organisation’s usual work or responsibilities.
- Ongoing maintenance of projects to which organisations have committed as part of a previous grant or their core business operations.
- Reimbursement of salaries of existing state or local government staff who will be supervising or working on the project as part of their usual duties.
- Retrospective funding i.e. activities that have commenced before the grant is offered and accepted. You should plan to begin your proposed activity after 1 March 2020.
Part 4: Application process – Tier 2

Tier 2 of the Education Program has a two-stage application process.

How to apply: Stage 1 – Expression of Interest

Step 1
Download and read the Program Guidelines (this document).

Step 2
Check your suitability for applying:
- Is your organisation eligible? (refer to Part 2: Eligibility)
- Are your activities suitable for this program? (refer to Guiding principles of environmental education projects)
- Read Appendix 1 – ‘The theoretical framework behind the new Trust Grants Program’.

Step 3
Download and complete the EOI Application Form

Step 4
Email your completed EOI Application Form to: apply@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au by 3pm, Monday 5 August 2019.

Step 5
The Trust will acknowledge receipt of your email within two working days.

Step 6
Within three weeks of the closing date you should expect to receive a confirmation email with a unique reference number for your EOI Application. This reference number should be used in all correspondence to and from the Trust.

Ensure you address the assessment criteria within these Guidelines. They will be used to assess your application.

How to apply: Stage 2 – Full application (by invitation only)

Step 1
If your EOI is successful, you will be invited by email to submit a full application in September 2019.

Step 2
Invited applicants will receive:
- Application and Budget Forms
• Feedback from the Technical Review Committee for you to address in your full application
• Guidance material on how to complete the Application Form and Budget.

Step 3
Complete the Application and Application Budget forms.

Step 4
Email your completed Application Form to: apply@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au
Submit your application and budget by the closing date: 3pm Monday 21 October 2019.
Late applications will not be accepted.

Step 5
The Trust will acknowledge receipt of your email within two working days.

If your EOI or full application is unsuccessful, you will receive notification from the Trust. Please take the opportunity to contact the Trust for feedback on your EOI or full application.

Assessment
Selection for NSW Environmental Trust grants is a statewide, merit-based process. Eligible applications will be assessed by the program’s independent Technical Review Committee against the program assessment criteria.

There are separate assessment criteria for EOI (stage 1) and full application (stage 2). The full application assessment criteria, as you would expect, are more detailed.

Stage 1: EOI assessment criteria

Criterion 1: Environmental outcome
• Proven environmental and educational needs and environmental outcomes.

Criterion 2: Target audience
• Appropriateness and understanding of the target audience and proposed engagement methods.
• Ability to build capacity of the target audience.

Criterion 3: Collaboration
• Relevant collaboration established, and collaborators have been actively involved in project scoping.

Criterion 4: Effectiveness
• Appropriateness of plan to address the stated environmental problem.
• Likelihood of success against project plan.
Stage 2: Full application assessment criteria (by invitation only)

**Criterion 1: Tangible environmental outcome**
- Clear explanation of the environmental problem and sustainability challenges to be addressed i.e. is there a need?
- Likelihood the project will make a difference to this problem. Clear description of the theory of change underlying the project and the inclusion of more systemic and transformative approaches (considering practices, values, worldviews, and systemic change).
- Demonstrated evidence that similar or existing programs/projects are not duplicated (this does not include expansion of pilot projects or implementation of plans developed through previous programs/projects).
- Degree of originality or innovation of your approach (not essential).

**Criterion 2: Target audience**
- Clear specification and understanding of target audience.
- Likely impact of target audience communication and engagement strategy.
- Extent to which project activities build capacity of target audience.

**Criterion 3: Project team and collaborators**
- Strength and appropriateness of the collaboration.
- Appropriateness of proposed engagement of collaborators.
- Relevance of project team expertise.
- Relevance of expertise of collaborators.

**Criterion 4: Project planning**
- Quality of the project plan to show how the proposed activities will facilitate behavioural and systemic changes.
- Proposed changes in behaviours and systems, and the activities and resources that facilitate these are measurable, either quantitatively and/or qualitatively.
- Clear explanation of how the project, including research and testing phases, will be evaluated and disseminated.
- How well the project plan incorporates measures to monitor and address identified risk factors.
- Feasible timeframe for achieving proposed objectives and outputs.

**Criterion 5: Value for money**
- Extent to which the budget supports the proposed activities and resources, and whether it will ensure the viability of the project overall.
- The likely environmental/sustainability impact of the proposal relative to the amount of program funds sought.
- Appropriateness of the mix in the total budget for materials and other direct project costs and in-kind contributions to the project.
Criterion 5: Value for money

- Demonstrated commitment of the applicant to continue to support the project’s outcomes beyond the life of the grant.
- Transferability for dissemination of project outcomes.

Timeline of assessment process

Step 1 – August 2019
Your EOI is submitted and you are assigned a project reference number (see How to apply: Stage 1 – Expression of Interest for information on how to apply).

Step 2 – August 2019
Trust Administration will check whether your application is eligible and complete for assessment purposes.

Step 3 – August/September 2019
The Education Program Technical Review Committee will assess the merit of your proposal by using the assessment criteria outlined at Stage 1: EOI assessment criteria

Step 4 – September/October 2019
Selected EOI applicants will be invited by email to submit full applications. Invited applicants may be asked to address any points of clarification requested by the Technical Review Committee (see How to apply: Stage 2 – Full application (by invitation only)

Step 5 – November 2019
Once full applications have been received, the Technical Review Committee will assess the merit of your application by using the assessment criteria outlined at Stage 2: Full application assessment criteria (by invitation only) and will make recommendations to the Environmental Trust. Trust Administration staff may also contact you or your nominated referees for further information about your application.

Step 6 – November 2019
The Trust, having considered the Technical Review Committee’s recommendations, determines which applicants will receive grants. Decisions by the Trust are final. There is no appeal process. Successful applicants may not receive the full amount requested and may be subject to special, as well as general, conditions of funding.

Step 7 – January – February 2020
Successful applicants will be announced by the Minister for Energy and Environment. A summary of each successful project will be published on the Trust website.

Technical Review Committee
The Trust establishes an independent Technical Review Committee for each grant program. These committees are made up of people with skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the specific program, and include at least one representative from the community and one from industry.
Part 5: Managing your grant

If you are successful in receiving an Environmental Education Program grant, you will be notified in February 2020. Upon commencement and for the duration of your project you will work with Trust Administration to prepare reports and required documentation (outlined below).

The Funding Agreement
You will be required to sign a Funding Agreement that sets out the terms and conditions associated with the grant.

Research and testing plan
You will need to develop and submit this plan at the beginning of your project about the social research and testing you will undertake.

Note: The Trust encourages you to incorporate a research phase into your project so that you have good evidence to base your project on. If you already have evidence for your project from thorough social research, you can opt out of conducting further research. A testing phase of your project is, however, compulsory for all successful grantees.

Work Plan
You must develop and submit a project work plan following the research and testing phase. The work plan is a more detailed version of the activity descriptions you include as part of your application and will help you to gauge the impact of your project. It will also build on the findings from the research and testing phase.

Project Measures
You will be required to complete project measures with your work plan and provide updates on these ‘measures’ with each progress report (see ‘During your project’ below).

Invoicing
A tax invoice is required for the amount of each instalment of your grant, plus GST if applicable.

The Trust’s Grants Administration team are available to answer questions and help you prepare and develop the required documentation. The Trust can be contacted on 02 8837 6093 or via email at info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au.

During your project
Grantees are required to prepare and submit progress reports periodically throughout their projects. The timeframe for reporting and progress payments will be agreed with your Grants Administrator when the grant is awarded and outlined in your Funding Agreement. Generally speaking, progress reports are required every 12 months.

The Trust recognises, however, that variations to your project are sometimes inevitable and these can be negotiated with your Grants Administrator at any time throughout your project.
Each report allows grantees to provide details on activities, achievements and expenditure. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on the implementation and application of the work plan and project measures.

Each report is reviewed by a representative of the Trust with the relevant technical expertise. If your report demonstrates that your project is progressing well, the next instalment of your grant will be authorised by the Trust and your Grant Administrator will provide you with feedback from the reviewer.

**Completing your project**

When your project is complete, grantees are required to submit a final report reflecting on achievements against the project’s objectives. Like progress reports, your final report will be reviewed by a representative of the Trust.

Your Grants Administrator will provide you with feedback on your project, and, if the requirements of the grant agreement have been met, your grant will be formally acquitted.

**General obligations**

Signing the Funding Agreement commits you to fulfilling the following obligations. The standard conditions of this agreement will not be changed at the request of grantees. Some key commitments are outlined below:

- Comply with all conditions contained in the Funding Agreement.
- Provide evidence of appropriate insurance coverage.
- Start your project within two months of receiving funding.
- To conform to relevant governance and probity standards, the Trust requires all grantees to follow NSW Government procurement procedures. This relates to all major budget items, such as the purchase of materials, or the engagement of contractors or consultants. The Trust will instigate random audits of grantees to ensure compliance.
- Seek prior approval for budget changes greater than 10% (while being aware that project administration costs should never be more than 10% of the project costs).
- Seek prior approval from the Trust to alter proposed outputs, outcomes or timeframes.
- Provide progress and final reports in accordance with the Trust’s reporting guidelines. This should also include a report on project measures.
- Include the relevant financial reporting with all progress and/or final reports.
- Acknowledge the Trust’s support in all promotional material or any public statements about your project. Your acknowledgement must include the NSW Government logo in written material.
- Be prepared for all knowledge gained as part of the grant to be made publicly available whether that be publishing the final report or promoting the project via other avenues available to the Trust.

**Privacy**

We use the information you supply to us for processing and assessing your application. While we do not publicly release your application as a matter of policy, we may be required to do so under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 or other lawful requirement. The Trust may also disclose information you supply to us for the purpose of evaluating and/or auditing its grant programs. If you require strict commercial and/or personal confidentiality, you should address this in your application.
Appendix 1

The theoretical framework behind the new Trust Grants Program

There are many theories of education and the learning process. Theories may arise from researching how environmental education is done in practice. Alternatively, theories may be developed and then tested by applying them to practice, and from these, models of practice are developed. The reality though, is often more complex than these models imply.

There are many studies, often led by governments, to inform policy implementation that have tried to assemble the various theories of behaviour change into models that identify the determinants of behaviour for more pro-environmental behaviour. These ‘models have looked to individuals’ beliefs, attitudes and values as predictors of behaviour’ and assume that behaviour is the ‘outcome of a linear and ultimately rational process, possibly because they assist in making policy responses relatively straightforward.’

‘More recently, however, it has been recognised that individuals do not exist in a social vacuum and, indeed, that in some cases the surrounding context overrides all of the cognitive factors included in the models.’

The redesign of the Trust’s Environmental Education Grants Program is in response to an evaluation by the University of Technology Sydney in 2017-2018. Three theories were recommended for consideration to enhance the effectiveness of environmental education projects and enable projects to consider the changes required in the system and not just the individual.

We are reminded that:

‘it is not just people that need to change but the circumstances under which we relate to one another and the Earth – circumstances that we, collectively have created, and that we, collectively, must change.’

Rather than a focus on the individual and mainly increasing awareness and knowledge, the reviewers recommended that project design looks beyond a ‘traditional focus on behaviour change to consider more systemic and transformative approaches considering practices, values, worldviews, and systemic change.’ These aspects have been embedded into the Trust’s Tier 2 Grant program ‘theory of change’ for environmental education projects.

---


Theory of change

The ‘theory of change’ shows how your project activities will improve the environment, individual learning and change systems that support sustainable practices. These might include new practices, communities of practice, social networks, infrastructure, procedures, services and policies, as well as a transformation in mindsets or worldviews, personal knowledge, values and behaviour and skills to act for the environment.

The theories proposed by the reviewers to inform the theory of change are:

- Transformative Learning for Sustainability
- Social practices theory
- Values Theory.

To expand educators thinking when planning a theory of change, Figure 2 below draws attention to the system factors that influence people’s needs and wants which in turn affects their lifestyle choices, which ultimately affects the environment. As the figure indicates, people live in communities and societies and work in organisations and homes with policies, procedures, practices and politics which can enhance or constrain a more sustainable lifestyle. It is these ‘system’ factors that need to be changed to support sustainable lifestyles and need to be considered when planning an education program.

Figure 2 The factors that influence needs and wants

This is why the new grant program encourages a research phase on the target group/s and the system constraints before planning the program and the proposed approach. A prototype testing phase has been included in the grant process to allow assumptions to be tested about

---

what can enhance environmental improvement. Integrating this phase develops a reflective learning from practice approach (or action research).

**More about the system and its influence on practice**

Basic needs and desires are motivators for our values and behaviour. Needs are driven by many complex factors from the biological to the emotional including social needs. Desires are shaped by culture, values, social norms, economic factors and advertising. Decisions about meeting these needs and wants can be driven by conscious and unconscious ‘frames’ or deep values and worldviews that form a person’s identity. What also determines people’s lifestyle is their ‘personal situation’, including their education, peers, gender, income and what they are capable of doing (knowledge, attitudes, skills).

However, to adopt a sustainable lifestyle there are further influences like social norms, culture, policy, politics, economy, media and infrastructure, that shape our practices and constrain or enhance a sustainable lifestyle (social – technical conditions). Besides this, a person is situated in a certain place, with a physical environment, availability of natural resources and climate which again may act as either a constraint or enabler of a sustainable lifestyle.

‘environmental education and education for sustainability (EfS) must be directed at changing things over and above the knowledge and actions of individual people.’

‘This means that EfS must necessarily be directed towards transforming both unsustainable collective social practices and the practice architectures that hold those practices in place.’

---

**Figure 3**

Factors influencing sustainable lifestyles

---


Designing a program to improve the environment means working with people to adopt more sustainable lifestyles, perhaps as a result of transformative learning. However, we often hear calls for transformation of the system too, from infrastructure, to services, to policy. Figure 3 lays out the complexity of the determinants of behaviour, the driving factors and motivational factors that influence sustainable lifestyles and consumption.

The system changes might include policies and infrastructure for a renewable energy system, or policies for energy efficient appliances, or electric cars; or incentives to encourage insulating homes, or services that make it easier to gain specific advice on installing solar energy.

System changes make it easier for people to live more sustainably. When designing the education program these system factors need to be researched and analysed too, to better understand the root causes of unsustainability. As Lakoff\(^{11}\) says, ‘the environment is political and developing capacity for people to change the system should be considered a part of an education program’.

\(^{11}\) Lakoff G.2010 Praxis Forum Why it matters how we frame the environment Environmental Communication 4:1; 70-81