

# NSW Secondary Principals' Council



## NSW Secondary Principals' Council Sustainability Position Paper

### **Preamble**

The NSW Secondary Principals' Council has a moral and ethical imperative to ensure that the NSW Department of Education adopts and embeds system-wide sustainable practices and quality sustainability educational outcomes.

Sustainability within the NSW Department of Education is acknowledged as a priority issue, and we seek to prioritise accountability with regular dialogue and feedback between the SPC and NSW Department of Education.

This formidable change will promote improved outcomes to benefit all NSW public schools, students and their communities.

### **Current context in DOE (Department of Education) NSW public schools**

The NSW Department of Education is committed to sustainability. They acknowledge that "Adopting more sustainable practices is one of the great challenges of our time. We have high expectations for ourselves to deliver this commitment."

The effects of climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, global health challenges and social conflict contribute to the broad concept of sustainability. It also includes health and wellbeing, equity and resilience as outlined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

The SPC will work collaboratively with the NSW Department of Education to:

- Equip our students and staff with the perspective, knowledge and skills for the future
- change our own practices, to ensure we have a positive impact wherever possible
- show others how we are changing our practices, to encourage them to do the same.

### **Beyond school Implications and opportunities**

The SPC We will be guided by the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019) Our sustainability commitment will help us achieve our obligations under the Declaration, so that students:

- become active and informed members of the community, who have empathy for the circumstances of others
- work for the common good



- sustain and improve natural and social environments.

### **The SPC outlines 3 areas for Recommendations.**

1. Recommendation Area 1. The delivery of goals and targets outlined in the NSW Department of Education's Sustainability policies are delivered.
2. Recommendation Area 2. Establish links with key stakeholders in educational and community settings.
3. Recommendation Area 3. Maintain a strong focus on teaching and learning to empower staff and students to embed sustainable practices through increased knowledge and skills.

All parts of our organisation have key roles. They include but are not limited to:

- School resources
- Innovative practice
- Adaptation
- Teaching and Learning
- Student voice
- SPC and leadership.

### **This position paper has been informed by the following DoE documents.**

Our commitment to sustainability (NSW DoE)  
Greening Our City Secretary's Pledge  
Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019)  
UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG)  
SEF v3

- 1. Recommendation Area 1.** The NSW SPC is concerned that the NSW Department of Education's policies focussed on sustainability are unfamiliar to most school settings and there is a lack of ongoing systemic strategies in place to support the goals and targets that have been set. It is vital that schools lead the way in our communities and that we focus on sustainable practice. Therefore, a focus on sustainability must inform all operational and educational decision making by the NSW Department of Education. with the Sustainability Reference Group representing the SPC's position.

### **NSW SPC Recommendations**

1.1 It is the SPC's position that the NSW Department of Education provides baseline data from the CTS document to the Sustainability Reference Group.

[https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/about-us/strategies-and-reports/sustainability-commitment/2022\\_Education\\_OurCommitmentToSustainability\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/about-us/strategies-and-reports/sustainability-commitment/2022_Education_OurCommitmentToSustainability_FINAL_WEB.pdf)

1.2 That the NSW Department of Education provides quarterly feedback on the implementation of 9 Goals to 2030 and 27 Actions to 2023, to the SPC. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/our-commitment-to-sustainability/our-9-goals-to-2030-and-actions-for-2021-23>

1.3 Systemic and embedded sustainable practices are implemented across all areas of the NSW Department of Education.

**2. Recommendation Area 2.** We all must play an active role in supporting the delivery of the NSW Department of Education's sustainability commitment. By collaborating with key stakeholders, we can embrace this opportunity to shape a positive legacy for our students and future generations. The SPC seeks to establish work in partnership with key stakeholders including the PPA, NSW EZEC, other reference groups such as SINSW and New Builds.

### **NSW SPC Recommendations**

2.1 Establish a working party with key stakeholders including the PPA, NSW EZEC, other reference groups such as SINSW and New Builds.

**3. Recommendation Area 3.** We have a moral imperative to equip our students to face the challenges of the world so that they are informed citizens. We must teach them the knowledge and skills to focus on future sustainable practices that will make a difference for them, their communities and beyond.

### **NSW SPC Recommendations**

3.1 The SPC must prioritise teaching and learning so that sustainability, as included in all NSW syllabuses, is effectively implemented. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/sustainability>

This will support:

- i. Teacher professional learning
- ii. Teaching and learning

3.2 That the 25 Environmental and zoo education centres that support learning about sustainability are adequately resourced to deliver on their mandate.

**Date submitted to Executive:** 17.5.2024.

**Reference Group Leader:** Catherine Glover

**Reference Group Members:** Rachel Powell, Darron Watt, Nikki Bodel, Kristen Miller, Paul Roger, Andrew FitzSimon (retired – Life Member).

**NSW Executive Member:** Denise Lofts

**Endorsed and Ratified at the Term 2 SPC State Assembly on 31 May 2024.**