



Schools Using Sustainable Strategies 2008 Forum Evaluation

The 2008 Schools Using Sustainable Strategies Forum was held at Linnaeus Estate at Broken Head on the 28th and 29th of May. More than 115 students from 20 regional high schools attended to learn how to become more sustainable within their schools and homes.

The evaluation involved surveying participants to assess the forum by agreeing or disagreeing with a number of comments made under the following key areas:

- The forum's organisation and structure
- The content provided
- The preferred sessions
- Meeting of the forums objectives

Comments under each topic were also encouraged. 17 teachers and 82 students participated in the survey.

Prior to the evaluation survey students worked in facilitated groups to reflect on the impact the forum had on them and to devise an action they could implement in their schools. The results of the survey and facilitated workshop are the subject of this report.

In summary, the survey showed that 93% of survey participants gave positive feedback on the Forum's organization and structure. The main concern of the remaining 7% was that the Forum was not long enough. 96% of participants were happy with the forums content and 98% felt that the forums objectives had been met. The most popular workshop was composting with the Greenhouse, followed by the Eco-drama workshop and waste and water auditing.

The group facilitation provided an overwhelming positive response however, a small number of constructive criticisms were voiced by students to consider for future planning. They were:

- the desire for more hands on activities,
 - the desire for a longer forum
- less repetition and more practical tools

The actions given the highest priority to implement in regional schools were:

- An 'eco-awareness' fundraising day
- Implement a school environmental management plan (SEMP)
 - Audit waste generation and electricity usage
 - Water conservation measures in school toilets
 - Plant 100 trees around the amphitheatre
 - Recycling in classrooms
 - Organic gardens
- Increase awareness of sustainability in school

For the complete results collated from students raw data see Appendix 1

Q1 Forum Organisation and Structure: Student Responses

Q1.FORUM ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5
Schools were given adequate information before forum	0	10	24	29	18
The Venue had appropriate facilities	0	2	7	28	45
The Forum was the appropriate length	4	7	14	27	30
The program was well structured	0	6	24	28	24
The evening activities were enjoyable	2	7	23	26	22
Sufficient time was given to each session	0	3	21	35	21
'Student teaching student' sessions were important	0	10	14	22	34
There was sufficient opportunity to interact	0	5	12	31	34
The forum met my expectations	0	2	9	32	39

Forum Organisation and Structure: Comments from Students

- Needs to be longer
- Wonderful experience
- left me with many promising ideas
- Great
- It was good
- A great way for students to gain knowledge
- Should have been longer
- Should be 3 days
- Extra days?
- It was an interesting 2 days
- Extra Days?
- I've learnt so much from this - thank you
- Very good, educational
- Living library was great
- Generally a good structure
- Very interesting - I learnt heaps
- Very well organized and structured
- A great experience
- 2 nights would be good
- 3 days would be gnarly
- Right on
- Should have gone longer
- Should have been 2 nights/3 days
- Living library was interesting
- Id love the forum to be longer
- I found some of the presentations a bit dull in presenting
- Could have been more structured
- It could have been more interaction stuff and a little less talking about irrelevant things eg beetroot
- The sessions 9 50 mins were too long
- Students teaching need more preparation
- Longer?
- Longer?
- Should have something heaps fun at night
- Students teaching were not very good teachers
- Need more time for travel back to school
- I had an excellent time and learnt so much valuable information
- Better than last year
- Better than expected - thanks

Q1 Forum Organisation and Structure: Teacher Responses

Q1.FORUM ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE	Strongly Disagree		3	Strongly Agree	
	1	2		4	5
Schools were given adequate information before forum	0	0	2	4	10
The Venue had appropriate facilities	0	0	0	3	14
The Forum was the appropriate length	0	0	0	4	13
The program was well structured	0	0	1	6	10
The evening activities were enjoyable	0	0	2	5	8
Sufficient time was given to each session	0	0	2	9	6
'Student teaching student' sessions were important	0	0	1	4	11
There was sufficient opportunity to interact	0	0	0	6	11
The forum met my expectations	0	0	0	4	13

Forum Organisation and Structure: Comments from Teachers

- Would like to have been to some sessions on the second day that run at the same time as others
- Possibly spread sessions out
- All fantastic yet again
- Longer forum with more time for breaks - lunch/recess
- Exceeded my expectations
- Well organized and structured. Maybe needs to give more choice about which sessions you attend
- Well done team - an outstanding conference

Q2 Forum Content: Student responses

NB: 17 students did not answer Question 3

Q2.FORUM CONTENT	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5
Sessions explored ideas that are useful to me	0	3	16	27	36
Sessions increased my understanding about environmental issues	0	3	12	28	29
Sessions increased my skill in implementing simple environmental techniques at school	0	2	7	20	34
Sessions were appropriately targeted to my needs/understanding	0	5	15	37	25

Forum Content: Comments from students

- the programs run by students lacked depth
- Very informative and helpful
- An experience I won't forget
- Loved it
- Awesome - thoughts were thorough
- Inspiring
- Lots of different workshops so if one didn't apply to me another did
- Great strategies to apply to my school
- I got a lot of ideas from the forum
- Not long enough
- I really enjoyed it as I came with no understanding - now I know a lot more
- Filled with good information
- Fun and interesting
- I learnt useful things and got inspiration
- Love the environment
- Not quite structures and lesson like enough - apart from the Alstonville/ Nimbin presentations there wasn't much info on what we could do
- Inspiring and a good cause
- Excellent forum - fantastic - everyone needs to understand and act

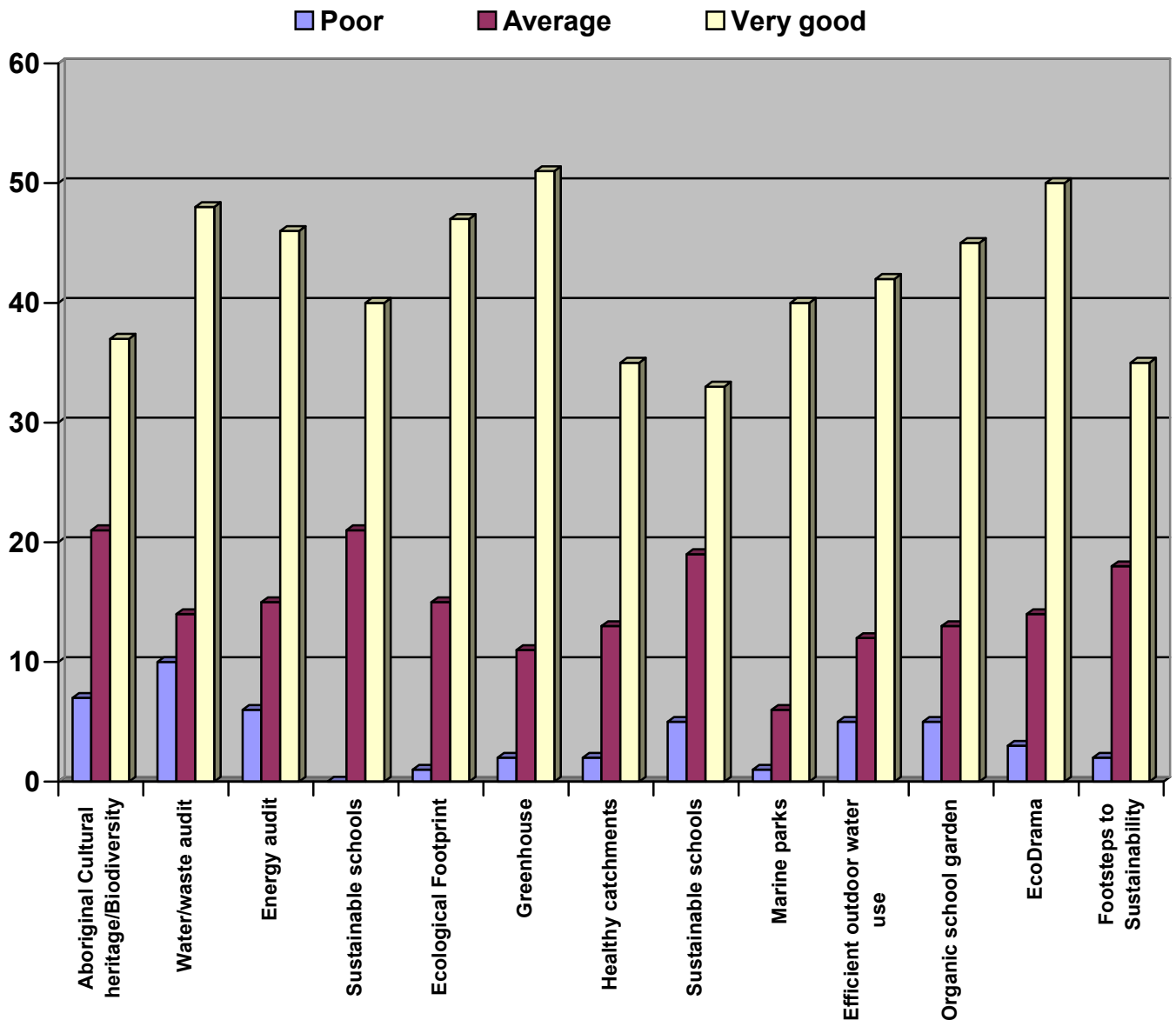
Forum Content: Comments from teachers

- I found that the students who had been to last year's forum gave me feedback that some things were repetitive to them
- A good range of topics and activities
- Good
- Some great ideas to inspire student involvement

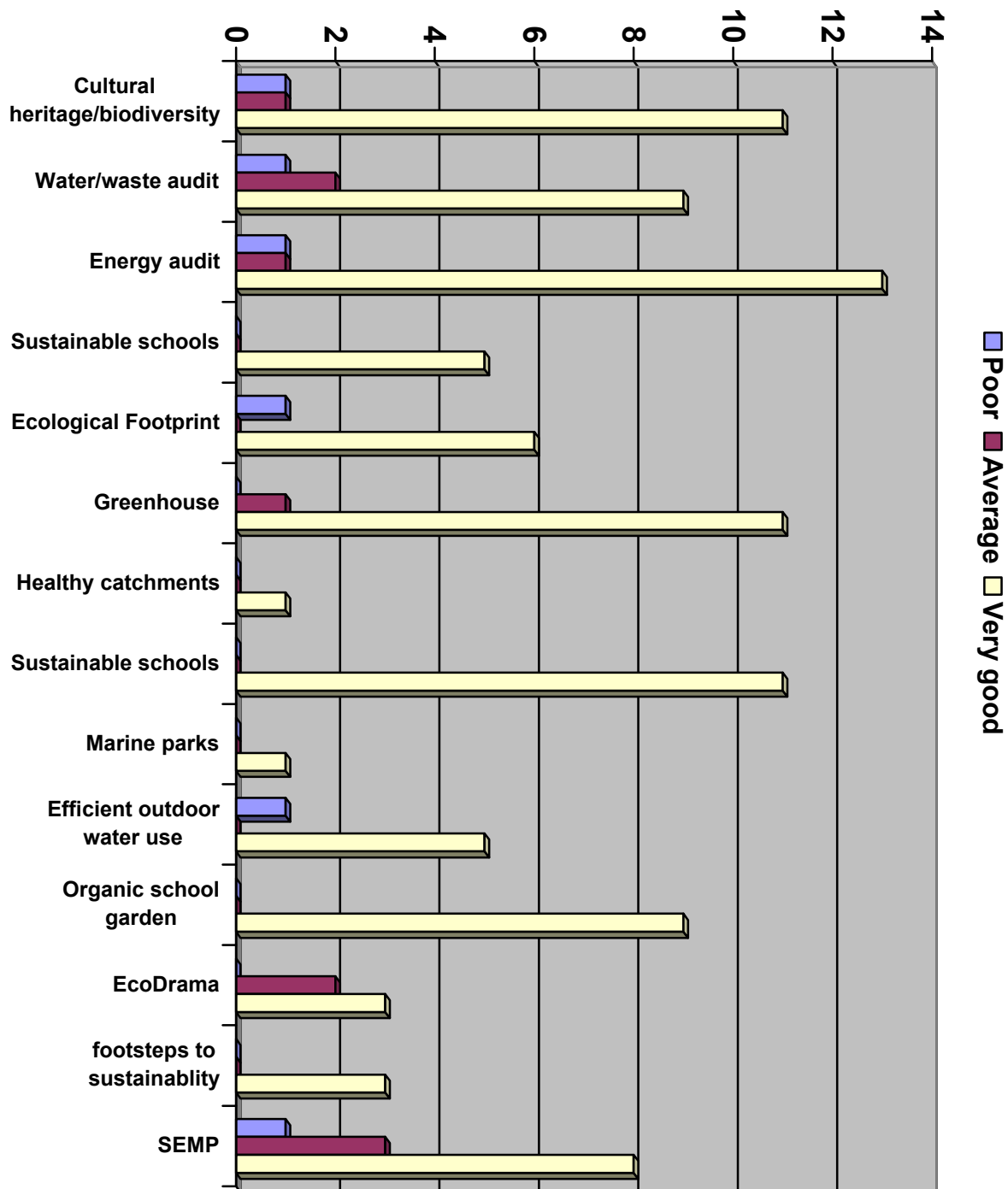
Q2 Forum Content: Teacher responses

Q2.FORUM CONTENT	Strongly Disagree ← 3 → Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
Sessions explored ideas that are useful to me	0	0	2	3	12
Sessions increased my understanding about environmental issues	0	0	4	4	9
Sessions increased my skill in implementing simple environmental techniques at school	0	0	0	4	10
Sessions were appropriately targeted to my needs/understanding	0	0	4	6	7

Q3 Which sessions did you like best?: Student Responses



Q3 Which session did you like best? Teacher Responses



Q4 The objectives of the forum have been met. Student Responses

Q4 OBJECTIVES	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5
Increase teacher and student awareness of best practice waste water and energy use, resource recovery and conservation/protection of biodiversity measures that can be implemented in schools	1	2	9	27	38
Increase student and teachers understanding of the connection between water, waste, energy and biodiversity conservation within the context of sustainability	0	1	5	25	36
Increase skills in implementation of simple waste, water and energy conservation techniques on school grounds that assist in the development of the SEMP	0	3	14	30	28
Develop strong support networks amongst youth and teachers attending the SUSS	0	1	19	28	27
Create links between schools and their local councils and the land and resource management agencies	0	1	24	24	28

Q4 The objectives of the forum have been met. Teacher Responses

Q4 OBJECTIVES	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5
Increase teacher and student awareness of best practice waste water and energy use, resource recovery and conservation/protection of biodiversity measures that can be implemented in schools	0	0	0	4	14
Increase student and teachers understanding of the connection between water, waste, energy and biodiversity conservation within the context of sustainability	0	0	2	2	14
Increase skills in implementation of simple waste, water and energy conservation techniques on school grounds that assist in the development of the SEMP	0	0	1	5	12
Develop strong support networks amongst youth and teachers attending the SUSS	0	0	4	7	7
Create links between schools and their local councils and the land and resource management agencies	0	1	5	4	7

Q5 Other information : Teacher Responses

a) Have you any further ideas to promote outcomes listed above?

- This was brilliant and student centred
- Need continued support for schools - a green team for the Tweed to audit all schools in the region
- Follow activities/workshops/awareness at school
- Spread the activity locations apart by 5 minute walks. Time to focus between activities and valuable exercise
- I think it's a great model and other regions need to be told about it
- Follow up workshops at school
- Sharing resources more effectively
- Allow for exams as certain schools couldn't attend
- Need more time to interact
- More structure student lead groups
- Teachers are the worst students and rarely implement when back at school
- Need sessions that are KLA specific and workshops for how rather than why

b) Would you like to make any comments about the Forum?

- We will go back to school and I know my students will make an environmental difference
- The forum was excellent and exceeded my expectations. It provided some great strategies in reaching and involving young people in sustainable living
- Not enough time to go to all sessions
- A wonderful opportunity for teachers and students to reset their environmental goals
- Fantastic
- Great organization - congratulations to all those involved. Would be good if on the second day we could select workshops of interest
- I would have liked more time de-briefing with students at the end of day 1
- Great stuff - inspiring for me personally and as a teacher - both for my science students and my environmental group
- Forum should have been on school holidays and 3-4 days
- Once again a fantastic event - well done

Q5 Other information : Student Responses

a) Have you any further ideas to promote outcomes listed above?

- More time would make it easier to cover more
- More icebreaker things like games
- Keep students from the same school together longer
- Hold regular meetings with other schools for environmental ideas and management
- Sponsorship, more advertisement through schools who are participating
- Could be more intensive and specific
- Loved it
- Another follow up SUSS day
- More links to Councils, ideas, examples to show us how to inspire our teachers and fellow students
- Networking
- More time and more hands on

- Longer living library
- Meeting more contacts for school groups
- More workshops and stay longer
- Keep students more interested and please more diverse in technical and non-technical language
- Need a bigger main tent it was hard to get a good view
- Year 11's were very informative - we will take our info and put it into action
- Inform everyone
- Maybe 2 nights
- Maybe 2 nights
- Hands on is very good - have an extra day to cover more activities more extensively
- Train the students who taught the activities for longer and better public speaking
- I'm looking forward to getting more involved in environmental work
- More material, more interactivity
- We need to do something not just sit down and listen
- It wasn't a good idea to immediately separate students at the very start as all of a sudden we were with groups of people we didn't know at all

b) Would you like to make any comments about the Forum?

- Wanna come next year
- Different menu next year - same 2 years in a row
- It was enlightening, interesting and opened my eyes
- It would have been good to be able to go to everything
- Well come next year
- Make it longer
- I quite enjoyed it
- It was awesome
- We should have more choice at evening activities
- Awesome - im coming next year
- The forum was great
- Was fun, learnt a lot and gained inspiration to protect the environment
- Loved planting trees and meeting new people
- It was great
- I had a great time ,really enjoyed myself and learnt a lot
- It was very enjoyable
- Excellent - informative
- Good learnt heaps and met new people
- Very good thank you - a good balance across a wide range of intellectual capabilities from different age groups
- It was fun and educational
- Informative
- Had a lot of fun
- Activism forever
- It was great looking forward to the next one
- I would like to do more hands on stuff
- Great time
- It was sooo good- thank you to everyone who organized the SUSS
- This was a very helpful and informative experience

- Fun and educational
- Not much new content from last year but a bigger audience
- The chef was good
- Brilliant I hope it continues
- Look forward to next year and had a lot of fun
- Please try to get some more seats
- Go for longer
- Good forum but needs improvement

Two people from Linnaeus Estate also completed the survey. Their comments are summarized below

- Onwards and upwards to next year
- Too stoked to comment now
- We must do 2009 and beyond

They considered all the project objectives met, enjoyed the sessions they attended and agreed that the content was good to very good

Appendix A: Comments from Facilitated Workshop

Group 1:

How did the Forum make you feel?

It broke stereotypes

Good examples from other schools

Enlightening

Felt secure in groups

New people and knowns

Liked group work

Exchanged knowledge

some w'shops not relevant

not practical enough

repetition

spread activities out

exercise between activities

more structured approach by facilitators

audit trainers need more preparation

ice breaker was harsh

Action for school - An eco-awareness day

Group 2

How did the forum make you feel?

Motivated

Wow

Fun

Energized

Amazing

Not alone

Positive

Shocking

Informative

Supported

Enjoyment with networking

annoyed in some workshops

Action for school - to Implement a SEMP and tie it to the Curriculum

Group 3

How did the forum make you feel?

Friendly

Supportive

Informative

Fun

Planning

Build contacts

Educational

Environment inspiring

Action for school - electricity and waste audit

Group 4

How did the forum make you feel?

Surprised by how much water is used

Bad about Australia's footprint and waste generation

Loved the living library

Inspired by Council and their openness

Good ideas re energy and recycling

Practical stuff to use at school
Learned new things and got amazing ideas
Found out how much people care

Action for school - ?

Group 5

Intrigued - reminders
Motivations
Eye-opening
Inspiring
Shocked
Learning experience
New information
interesting

Action for school?

Group 6

How did the forum make you feel?

Surprised
Bamboozled
Inspirational
Scary
New ideas
Great
Should be whole school
Great living library
Linnaeus was great design, isolation

need smaller groups
need more preparation

Action for school - water conservation in toilets, bokashi in canteen and compost

Group 7

How did the forum make you feel?

Learnt meaning of biodiversity
Save power
New ways of doing things
More motivated for environment

Action for school - plant 100 trees in amphitheatre