

Summary of Results of the 2006/2007 Supplementary School Census - Part 8 - Environmental Sustainability

Background:

All Victorian Government schools must complete a mid-year census coordinated by the Department. Environment Sustainability questions were included within the questionnaire for the first time in 2005/06. The environmental sustainability census questions have been designed to provide benchmark data for sustainability in schools.

It should be noted that the data reliably shows trends of increased uptake of environmental sustainability in schools. The source of the data is schools' perceptions of their commitment to and implementation of environmental sustainability and does not necessarily prove the level of activity in schools.

Environmental Sustainability Questions:

The four questions reflect a whole school approach and implementation of environmental sustainability within facilities, daily operations and curriculum delivery within schools:

- Q1a - Has your school changed/retrofitted its facilities in the last 12 months to reflect and incorporate sustainability? (e.g. water use reductions, utilising natural light, installing solar panels, fitting water tanks)
- Q1b - Do your school's everyday operations include sustainability practice? (e.g. paper recycling, composting, double sided printing, automatic computer shut-down)
- Q1c - Does your school include Environmental Sustainability in its school plan?
- Q1d - Does your school have an Environmental Sustainability policy?

Census Summary:

DEECD has provided the data from the census using the following parameters:

Regions:

- Northern Metropolitan;
- Southern Metropolitan;
- Eastern Metropolitan;
- Western Metropolitan;
- Barwon South Western;
- Grampians;
- Loddon Mallee;
- Hume; and
- Gippsland.

School type:

- Primary
- Secondary;
- Primary/Secondary;
- Special; and

- Language.

School Size:

- <101;
- 101 – 350;
- 351-800;
- 801-1400;
- >1400.

Results:

General Trends:

- The majority of schools have embedded environmental sustainability, in some way, within their schools.
- There is a 10% difference between metropolitan and regional/rural schools in incorporating environmental sustainability within schools, with the metropolitan schools leading the way:
 - This 10% difference between metropolitan and regional/rural schools has been noted for schools that have changed facilities to incorporate sustainability, incorporating environmental sustainability within the school plan and developing an environment policy; and
 - The responses on incorporation of sustainability within everyday operations suggest that regional or rural schools don't have or are not utilising resources/expertise to make environmental sustainability improvements within the schools.
- 10% more primary than secondary schools have formalised environmental sustainability within their school plans. Primary school principals and school councils have shown a higher level of commitment in the implementation of environment sustainability across school operations, including curriculum and facility management.
- The eastern and southern metropolitan regions had the highest number of schools incorporating sustainability within everyday operations, including environmental sustainability within its school plan and having an environment sustainability policy.
- Gippsland and Hume regions had the lowest percentage of take up of environmental sustainability within schools.
- A very high percentage of schools across all regions, type and size are incorporating sustainability within their everyday operations and has a greater uptake than facility changes or incorporating it into their school plans.
- A very low percentage of schools have had an environmental policy developed for their school.

Detailed Results:

Q1a - Has your school changed/retrofitted its facilities in the last 12 months to reflect and incorporate sustainability? (e.g. water use reductions, utilising natural light, installing solar panels, fitting water tanks)

The average percentage of schools overall that had made changes to school facilities to incorporate sustainability is 52.5%:

By Region:

- 59% of metropolitan schools, compared with
- 45% of regional/rural schools

By School Type:

- 53% of Primary schools
- 54% of Secondary schools
- 52% of P-12 schools.

By School Size:

- <101 41%
- 101-350 51%
- 351-800 61%
- 801-1400 63%
- >1400 62%

Key findings:

- Metropolitan schools have on average made 14% more changes to school facilities to incorporate sustainability compared with regional or rural schools.
- In terms of regions which had made changes to school facilities to incorporate sustainability, the highest was southern metropolitan with 62% of compared with only 33% of schools in the Hume region.
- The larger the school size the more likely that the school had undertaken sustainability changes to school facilities, e.g. there is a 20% difference between smallest to largest school size.

Q1b - Do your school's everyday operations include sustainability practices? (e.g. paper recycling, composting, double sided printing, automatic computer shut-down)

94% of schools have incorporated sustainability practices within their everyday operations.

By Region:

- 96% of metropolitan schools, compared with
- 93% of regional/rural schools

By School Type:

- 95% of Primary schools
- 95% of Secondary schools
- 86% of P-12 schools.

By School Size:

- <101 93%
- 101-350 94%
- 351-800 96%
- 801-1400 97%
- >1400 100%

Key Findings:

- Metropolitan schools were 3% higher than regional or rural schools in incorporating sustainability practices in everyday operations.
- The range of responses to incorporating sustainability within everyday operations is shown by the highest 99% (Eastern Metropolitan Region) and lowest 89% (Gippsland Region).
- P-12 schools are marginally behind primary and secondary schools in incorporating sustainability practices.
- The larger the school size the more likely that the school had incorporated sustainability changes within everyday operations, e.g. there is a 20% difference between smallest to largest school size.

Q1c - Does your school include Environmental Sustainability in its school plan?

49% of schools had included environmental sustainability within their school plan.

By Region:

- 56% of metropolitan schools, compared with
- 45% of regional/rural schools

By School Type:

- 55% of Primary schools
- 44% of Secondary schools
- 44% of P-12
- 38% of Special schools

By School Size:

- <101 45%
- 101-350 52%
- 351-800 57%
- 801-1400 55%
- >1400 52%

Key findings:

- 10% more metropolitan schools include environmental sustainability within their school plans than regional schools.
- The best performing region was the Eastern Metropolitan Region (67%), with the Gippsland region again having the lowest percentage of schools taking up environmental sustainability within the school plan (29%).
- Primary schools are leading the way (55%) in incorporating environment sustainability within its school plan.
- The smaller schools (<101) were less likely to have environmental sustainability within their school plans.

Q1d - Does your school have an Environmental Sustainability policy?

21% of schools have an environmental sustainability policy.

By Region:

- 25% of metropolitan schools, compared with
- 17% of regional/rural schools

By School Type:

- 23% of Primary schools
- 16% of Secondary schools
- 24% of Primary/Secondary schools

By School Size:

- <101 15%
- 101-350 22%
- 351-800 26%
- 801-1400 23%
- >1400 17%

Key Findings:

- The Eastern Metropolitan Region (31%) was highest in having an Environmental Sustainability policy, with the Gippsland region having the lowest percentage of schools (11%).
- Primary schools were more likely to have environmental sustainability policies than secondary schools.
- In terms of school size, there is a trend for the mid-sized schools to be more likely to have environmental sustainability policies, with the very small (<101) and large schools (>1400) a comparatively smaller uptake.