

Supported by City of Townsville

EVENT REVIEW



CONNECTING REGIONAL QUEENSLAND

SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

Let's not waste the reef

**29 OCTOBER 2019
ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE
TOWNSVILLE**

EVENT REVIEW

Connecting Regional Queensland: Sustainability Summit was an exemplar project demonstrating school and organisational collaboration. Nineteen schools and twelve organisations were involved in the event on October 29, 2019 that was generously hosted by St Patrick's College in Townsville. We would like to thank both St Patrick's College and the City of Townsville for their support of this capacity building and knowledge sharing event.

The Sustainability Summit was a pilot project initiated by the Sustainable Schools Network Limited and Glowing Green Australia and engaged approximately 130 regional stakeholders. Both organisations view stakeholder engagement as critical to providing improved and ongoing services. 'Connecting Regional Queensland' aimed to showcase leading local schools and to offer professional development for educational communities. The event also intended to introduce the Sustainable Development Goals and examine their application in the school environment.

Some of the event highlights included:

- Collaboration between facilitating organisations;
- Presentations by nine schools, including St Patrick's College who showcased their marine science and innovative entrepreneur programs;
- Reef Guardian and Glowing Green Australia presentations;
- Afternoon consultation session with Queensland 'education for sustainability' stakeholders.

Feedback from participants was overwhelming positive reporting:

- The event was well-organised;
- An unique opportunity for high school students;
- Empowered students to present their school's projects; and,
- Was a rare opportunity for regional practitioners to network.

One teacher stated, "*Knowing what other schools are doing means I don't have to do it all; between us we are making a greater impact than we can alone*". This is the power of partnerships!

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Recommendations for future events will be discussed at the conclusion of this review.



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AUDIENCE & MARKETING METRICS

Over 130 people participated in the Sustainability Summit in Townsville, consisting of ratio of approximately 4:1 students to teacher. As the event was coordinated from the Gold Coast, this is an exceptional outcome given no pre-established relationships with the SSN existed prior to this event.

The Summit was marketed using social media and email campaigns by both the SSN and Reef Guardian Schools program. Email was identified as the most common way attendees became engaged in the event. Whilst opportunities to present also increased school participation. A combination of private and public schools attended, as well as both primary and secondary schools.

A small amount of funding was spent on Facebook marketing, which reached 2902 people. 77.6% of this reach was women, with 33-44, 45-54 and 13-17 years of age being the most engaged age groups.

FUNDING

Only one source of funding was accessed for this event, which was the sponsorship provided by the City of Townsville. As it was a FREE ticketed event no remuneration was achieved via ticket sales.

Event costs such as flights, accommodation, speaker fee, catering and marketing were funded by the City of Townsville sponsorship. The SSN provided over 80 hours of voluntary time to coordinate and deliver this event, which is valued at \$6000.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on a post-review consultation session between the SSN and Glowing Green Australia and the survey responses provided by the event participants, it is recommended that Sustainability Summits are a valuable learning and networking opportunity both for the organisers and participants. Future considerations include:

- Maintaining the size of the group, diversity of schools and year levels, and the 4:1 student teacher ratio.
- Attempting to ensure the event is provided free of charge.
- Adding some interactive elements to the student presentations, professional development and consultation event components.
- Engaging a recognisable youth presenter.
- Utilising the Summit as an opportunity to work with two locations per event. For instance, a North Queensland event could include both Townsville and Cairns. This would ensure greater reach and wider community engagement as a result of the input from the SSN and Glowing Green Australia.
- Seeking greater sponsorship to ensure the event is financially viable.
- Delivering two Summits (therefore 4 events) per year.

The 'Connecting Regional Queensland: Sustainability Summit' model aims to educate and connect schools to imagine a sustainable future.

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