2020 SUSTAINABILITY SYMPOSIUM

Igniting souls, inspiring change

EVENT REVIEW

26-28 APRIL 2020

www.ssn.org.au
The Sustainable Schools Network Limited acknowledge and pay respect to the Yugambeh, Koombumerrii and Bundjalung people, past, present and future, of the Gold Coast region. We also acknowledge the many Aboriginal people from other diverse regions as well as Torres Strait and South Sea Islander people who now live in the local area and have made an important contribution to our community.

The SSN understand the importance of the cross curriculum priority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture complementing that of sustainability. We recognise that the SSN's foundations on the Gold Coast is a special part of Yugambeh country. Tallebudgera, the location of our headquarters, is a vital place for bush food harvesting, hunting and fishing and we acknowledge that the word Tallebudgera is an aboriginal word meaning ‘good fish’.

The SSN recognise the strong connections of Indigenous people to the country of their ancestors. We value all that Indigenous elders past, present and emerging have to teach us about how to live sustainably and we recognise Indigenous people are the true custodians of the land upon which we meet.
The 2020 Sustainability Symposium delivered the vision of the Sustainable Schools Network Limited to educate and connect school communities to imagine a sustainable future.

Addressing Sustainable Development Goals 11, 16 and 17, the event empowered youth leaders and enabled teachers and other school community members to educate for sustainability.

The event featured Jaimie Cloud from The Cloud Institute in New York and Damon Gameau from 2040. A number of exceptional speakers were involved in the event, such as Erfan Daliri, Luka Lesson, Alison Sammel, Cam Mackenzie, Rory O’Connor, Larissa Rose, and Christine McDougall.

According to one attendee the 2020 Sustainability Symposium, "...reignited my passion for wanting to implement sustainable practices into the school".

Over 10 months of planning led to the delivery of the 2020 Sustainability Symposium, which required a fast and flexible response to COVID-19 restrictions. The three-day event involved workshops with Jaimie Cloud, from the Cloud Institute via Zoom, pre-recorded learning content being released on YouTube (flipped classroom concept), a live Q&A session with a diverse range of speakers on Zoom that was also live-streamed to Facebook, and a Connect-Ed Feed which was the re-imagined online dinner.

Content was provided for students, teachers, parents, and business service managers, and was also viewed by community members interested in working with schools. Learning about mental models, Indigenous totems, poetry for social justice and how to improve campus resource management were just some of the topics covered. Sustainability is a multi-dimensional concept and the diversity of the content presented at the 2020 Sustainability Symposium leaves a learning legacy for school communities.

The SSN are grateful to our event partners SUEZ Community Grants and City of Gold Coast, and to all of our sponsors. Thank you to all people who participated and demonstrated that even when times are tough, education for sustainability matters. In fact, a common theme in the 2020 Sustainability Symposium was that EfS is more important than ever.

Thank you to Kim Beasy and Laura Ripoll Gonzalez for conducting the survey into this event and producing an information Industry Report. And THANK YOU to all of the SSN Volunteers who diligently and passionately worked to deliver an incredible event during unusual circumstances. You are making a difference!

Katie Norman, CEO
The 2020 Sustainability Symposium aimed to:

- develop a common language regarding sustainability;
- empower the youth leaders required for a sustainable future;
- address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 11 and 16; and
- build partnerships for the goals.

**Goal #1: Developing a common language about the concept of sustainability.** The reason being, that although sustainability is expressed as a cross-curriculum priority in the Australian Curriculum requiring a multi-dimensional understanding, this does not generally translate into practice. (This was also a goal of the 2019 Sustainability Symposium). The industry report indicates that participants understand education about sustainability and are less familiar with education for sustainability (EfS). Further, their confidence to deliver EfS is limited.

*Recommendation:* the 2021 Sustainability Symposium aims to focus on education for sustainability and building confidence to deliver this paradigm in educational contexts.

**Goal #2: Empowering youth leaders required for a sustainable future.** Based on the recommendations from the 2019 event, this goal was added for 2020. In response to COVID-19, almost all of the youth program was cancelled, therefore it is difficult to assess this goal.

*Recommendation:* maintain this goal for the 2021 event.

**Goal #3: Address two SDGs - #11 and #16.** Exit interviews with event sponsors indicated that Goal 1 was enhanced as a result of the inclusion of SDG 16. The industry report identified that both goals were moderately familiar to most survey respondents, and participants would benefit from more practical examples of how to utilise the SDGs in the school context.

*Recommendation:* maintain two goals (one of a more social nature and the other environmental) in future events and work towards improving measures that matter for this goal.

**Goal #4: Building partnerships for sustainability** was also the inaugural 2019 Symposium event goal. This year 80 organisations were involved or participated in the event, an increase from 44 in 2019. As the live Q&A visually demonstrated, when organisations come together and share their knowledge and resources, there is a greater potential for learning.

*Recommendation:* As the foundation of the SSN model, this event goal will remain for future years.
Supporting local communities to build a brighter future

As an environmental services provider, we believe that caring for the environment is a shared responsibility. We deliver leading solutions to help businesses, governments and communities manage their waste, recycling, water and wastewater.

We’re also committed to investing in inspiring organisations like the Sustainable Schools Network that are giving their all to build strong communities and create a brighter future for people and the planet.

Together, we can take small steps that leave a big impact.
The modified, online 2020 Sustainability Symposium involved the release of pre-recorded videos on 26 and 27 April 2020. These were targeted at parents, students and predominantly operational school leaders.

On the morning of Sunday 26 April (to remove barriers for teacher participation), a professional development session for educators was hosted with Jaimie Cloud. Jaimie also facilitated a youth masterclass on Monday 27 April 2020.

On Tuesday 28 April, a live Q&A session was delivered for operational leaders using Zoom and this was live streamed to Facebook and YouTube. In the evening, a dinner event featured a panel discussion on education for sustainability.

Featured presenters were: Jaimie Cloud from The Cloud Institute, Damon Gameau from 2040, Erfan Daliri author of Raising Humanity, Luka Lesson from The Future Ancients, Rory O’Connor from Yugambeh Museum, Cam Mackenzie, Alison Sammel, Christine McDougall, Larissa Rose and many others. The incredible line up of over 30 presenters and demonstration of partnership for this event was exceptional. The event review indicated the following event program outcomes:

Program strengths:
- More inspired to act.
- Reinforced and improved understandings of sustainability - learning something new.
- New connections made by participants with the intent to follow up post event (78.6% of survey respondents).
- Encouraged teachers to consider mental models, ecological literacy and diverse perspectives.
- Increased confidence and determination to take risks, continue learning, share learnings with colleagues, involve students through student leadership initiatives, network with attendees, and engage with local communities.
- Reinforced importance of connecting with Indigenous community.
- Jaimie Cloud and Chelsea McLean were mentioned as valued event attributes.

Program improvements:
- Youth program was more applicable for older students (note from SSN: the delivered youth aspect was intended for secondary students, although younger students participated).
- Online environment limited opportunities to engage with others.
- Request for more year level and subject specific learning experiences.
- More positive examples of sustainability, rather than unsustainability.
- Continued professional learning to enable sustainability to be embedded in curriculum and to build confidence to educate others.
- Practical examples including lesson plans were also requested.
OVERVIEW

Using multiple platforms, the online version of the 2020 Sustainability Symposium reached a diverse audience. Key statistics are:

- 1340 people participated in the event across Zoom, Facebook and YouTube.
- Over 60 schools and 80 organisations were registered to participate in the online event (as a minimum identified by Humanitix), even though the student sessions were sold out before the end of the early bird pricing period (500 participants).
- 383 people attended 4 live ZOOM sessions, including 60 youth. Those participating in the live event elements on Zoom attended up to 95% of the sessions.
- 465 people engaged in the live-streamed elements on Facebook, with over 7,700 people reached through this platform.
- 493 unique viewers engaged via the pre-released event material on the YouTube platform.

It is important to disclose that media platforms measure data differently (viewers and reach), and some people may have participated on multiple platforms - therefore figures are suggested as an estimate only.

FACEBOOK

On April 28th, the SSN Facebook page engaged 465 people, reached 7,711 people due to live streaming the Live Q&A and Connect-ED Feed from Zoom. It also measured 1,253 views of the three videos presented during the Live Q&A. As illustrated in the chart, almost half of the views were for the second Live Q&A video, with 581 views from 2-4pm.

The engaged participants were:
- predominantly in Queensland, with a smaller number around Australia.
- 82% women
- 57% aged 35-54 years of age.
These figures are consistent with the Industry Report with 83.3% female participants, and 65% of participants aged 40-60 years of age.

The 2020 Sustainability Symposium event page reached 3800 people and registered 254 responses to the event. Dinner attendees were invited to post photos to the event page. 30% of the population who responded were women aged between 35-44 years of age. 44% of the population were from the Gold Coast, Australia.
As the primary source of pre-recorded learning, it was anticipated a significant level of engagement would occur on Youtube. According to the platforms’ analytics, 558 views occurred by 210 unique viewers over the event duration, including 46.1 watch hours. The top two videos were Damon Gameau's call to action and the Leading Behaviour Change (Parent session). Video participants were identified as almost 70% women from Australia.

Since the event, there have been a further 502 views including 283 unique viewers and 27.1 watch hours (29 April - 12 June 2020). The top performing video is now the Parent Session featuring Erfan Daliri (as illustrated in the graph).

### HUMANITIX AND ZOOM

Humanitix data identified total registrations at 506 tickets, from 338 orders. The highest ticket sale was for the Connect-Ed Feed, followed by the youth masterclass (as illustrated in the graph).

60 schools and 80 organisations registered for the event.

According to Zoom analytics, the Live Q&A achieved a significantly high attendance rate (94%) from the 59 unique viewers (134 total viewers). There were 94 questions asked during this session.

The Connect-ED Feed analytics on Zoom registered 63 unique viewers (85 total viewers) with attendance rates at 95%. 67 questions were asked during the evening function.

The Professional Development session with Jaimie Cloud engaged a total of 70 educators, whilst the Youth Masterclass engaged approximately 94 participants (of which at least 60 were youth participants).
OVERVIEW

Shifting from an in person event to an online event meant months of logistical planning were essentially shelved as new plans were created. All Saints Anglican School and Griffith University deserve special mention for their considerable input into the planning of the original format. Thank you!

COVID-19 resulted in a 90 degree turn in the event plan about six weeks prior to event delivery dates. Facilitating the event in the timeframe originally planned was an incredible feat for the SSN team.

A key outcome from the change to an online format was enhanced accessibility across Australia and our first international attendees.

Logistical Considerations

The original idea of delivering a Symposium as a seven-day event across four venues was ambitious. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the SSN changed the focus rather than choosing to cancel or postpone. As a result of adapting, our capacity has grown around using online platforms to educate and connect school communities. We now possess digital functionality that includes:

- Zoom, both as a meeting and webinar tool
- Live-streaming to Facebook and YouTube
- A video production and creative team
- GSuite to manage our team and digital communication.

This improvement in our service offering will enable a hybrid event in 2021 at All Saints Anglican School, with pre-learning elements online and some aspects live-streamed. Further training is recommended for the SSN team to embrace the available digital platforms to their fullest capacity, allowing the event to be staged as a nationally accessible learning experience.

Our relationship with ASAS is positive - there is commitment to deliver the 2021 Sustainability Symposium, including access to a new function centre where the dinner will be hosted. As we look to find the silver linings in the delivery of the 2020 event, the relationships nurtured with ASAS will enable the smooth delivery of a meaningful and quality learning experience in 2020.
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- Find out how to make environmentally friendly cleaning products
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- Understand how you can use green energy
- Examine how LED lighting works
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CITY OF GOLDCOAST.
The annual Sustainability Symposium is the SSN’s major event and fundraising activity. The 2020 event covered costs and will enable the SSN to remain operational.

Incoming funds of $45,226.35 were gained through multiple sources as graphically presented below. Our two major sponsors accounted for over 50% of the funds raised. Thank you to SUEZ Community Grants and the City of Gold Coast.

As a result of the grant, sponsorships and donations received we were able to minimise ticket costs for attendees and ensure the event remains accessible and inclusive.

**Costs**

The 2020 Sustainability Symposium incurred costs in a variety of different ways. These included:

- Speaker fees
- Administration and human resources costs for the SSN
- Marketing and gifts
- Ticketing and software fees
- Insurance

Approximately $6,000 remains from the Symposium budget to cover SSN ongoing operational costs.

We acknowledge these people who helped deliver a successful event, with an estimate of over 2500 hours of donated time - THANK YOU!

- Healthy Planet Now for speaker gift donations.
- SSN volunteers and Symposium presenters.
- Researchers Kim Beasy (UTAS) and Laura Ripoll Gonzalez (GU).
Thank you to our sponsors and supporters of the 2020 Sustainability Symposium.
In 2020, the SSN expanded both the marketing team and inputs in comparison to the inaugural event. The 2020 Sustainability Symposium involved the following inputs:

- Event page and advertisements of Facebook
- Blank GC
- Teacher publication
- Mailchimp
- Website
- LinkedIn event page
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Speaker and sponsor promotions

Marketing Strategy
Plans were in place for media releases for television and radio, however with the modifications to the event format meant these mediums were no longer required. To raise event awareness within school communities, time and money were invested to:

- Expand the SSN mailing list and use of mailchimp, resulting in over 2,500 contacts by the time the event occurred.
- Write three articles for Blank GC (a local magazine with exposure of 30,000 print readers monthly, online reader group of over 25,000 people, and 14,000+ Facebook likes, 8,700+ Instagram followers, 1,500 twitter followers).
- Promoting via ‘Teacher’, which has 12,000+ twitter followers, 12,300+ Facebook followers, and one of the highest ranking podcasts in iTunes in the k-12 sector. Readership/subscriber numbers include: (web) 227,000+ page views per month, 125,000 unique visitors per month, 1 million + unique visitors per year, 2 million + page views annually; (weekly bulletin) 58,900+ subscribers; (podcasts) 25,000+ monthly downloads, 500,000+ total podcast downloads.
- Upgrading the SSN website, including a dedicated event page - now the second most popular page on the SSN website and engaged 1,239 people.
- Increase the LinkedIn following on the SSN page through team member contacts; creation of 2020 Sustainability Symposium event page (appeared to be a new feature on LinkedIn).
- Engage over 100 subscribers on YouTube from a starting point of 6.
- Increase following on Facebook, active tagging of sponsors and speakers, and paid promotion on Facebook.

Recommendation: All above media channels continue to be used in 2021, adding television, radio and other print media.
This study documented and reviewed the ‘SSN 2020 Sustainability Symposium: Igniting Souls, Inspiring Change’ online event. It considered the impacts of the partnerships, networking and mentoring opportunities such as multi-stakeholder Education for Sustainability (EfS) which events such as this offer, and their implications for local sustainable development. Participants were invited to complete an online survey and share their knowledge and perceptions on EfS, their perceptions around sustainability, as well as the applicability of the Sustainable Development Goals framework in EfS. Finally, the survey reflected participants’ views on the impact of the SSN 2020 Sustainability Symposium.

The findings identified in the Industry Report indicated the valuable contribution the Symposium made to the development and practice of EfS. The findings reflect on the importance of underlying perceptions and knowledge about sustainability. In particular, the analysis reveals that participants’ knowledge of sustainability is primarily focused on environmental sustainability and especially consumption patterns, energy and waste management and reduction.

A triple-bottom-line approach to sustainability, including social, environmental and economic aspects would require a close look at the narratives underpinning EfS. Research in EfS has emphasised the importance of the three pillars approach to sustainability and the applicability of the UN’s SDG framework in EfS. However, the implementation of the framework in practice poses several challenges to educators. In this respect, the level of knowledge across the different SDGs was explored to ascertain which areas to focus on in the development of EfS materials to provide holistic approaches to learning about sustainable development.

Finally, the analysis reveals three elements: Firstly, the importance of fostering partnerships in communities around EfS where exchanges of information and knowledge can lead to practical outcomes. Secondly, creating learning outcomes and thirdly, devising alternative pedagogies for the progression of the critical skills our children need to design a sustainable future for all, together.
The 2020 Sustainability Symposium vision is to ignite souls and inspire change. With the adaptations made in response to COVID-19 restrictions, the event provided a different educational and capacity building experience.

The 2020 Sustainability Symposium now provides creative commons educational materials for schools to utilise - with more to come! It is important that this becomes part of the legacy created by future events.

2020 Sustainability Symposium Legacy

In 2020 more participants were involved in the event than the previous year, from a greater number of Australian states and with our first international participants joining online. This reach ensures more regions become interested in and take action in response to EfS. As documented in the Industry Report, school community members identified:

- Attending the event to be empowered and to learn innovative approaches to sustainability education.

Attendees reported seeking to be connected and accessing relevant information regarding EfS on an ongoing basis. The Sustainable Schools Network can now provide resources for schools to access at any stage as a result of the event. The flipped classroom elements have been accessible since the event and as YouTube analytics have demonstrated these tools are being viewed on an ongoing basis.

Another outcome of the event has been a slight increase in school memberships. This free component of the SSN program ensures ongoing support and aims to connect teachers in particular with a support network to enable and share learning about the practice of education for sustainability.

Recommendation: Specific learning resources, particularly lesson plans, be provided as part of any future events (this was requested by survey respondents). The SSN will consider options that build an ongoing legacy into future Sustainability Symposiaums.
The Sustainable Schools Network invite you to participate in the 2021 Sustainability Symposium. This invitation is extended to your whole school community as we aim to engage you collectively in taking action to create a sustainable future for generations to come.

What we do now has an impact on the future, and as we design the process of education the SSN recognise the importance of valuing sustainability. Sustainability involves the interactivity and interdependence of social, economic and environmental systems. In 2020, the Sustainability Symposium focused mainly on social and environmental matters in an effort to highlight the importance of compassionate, reciprocal and empathetic relationships between people and planet.

**SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS NETWORK 2021 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations for the 2021 Sustainability Symposium

Event goals: maintain the four goals, with greater specificity for the first goal to, 'build a common language and practice of education for sustainability'.

Speakers: align with the event goals and ensure resources for schools are built into any presentation. Chosen speakers should also address some of the limitations identified by the event survey such as subject or year level learning experiences, how to educate using the SDG framework and so forth.

Logistics: a hybrid event is recommended whereby prior learning is released online and accessible to participants and the wider community and some elements are live streamed. It is intended that in person and online elements will be offered for the 2021 Sustainability Symposium.

Audience: engaging with increasing numbers of schools and regions remains a priority for the event. As tickets sold out early to the student sessions and would not have seen an increase in participating schools, yet an increase in participants, how to engage greater numbers of schools will need to be considered for 2021.

Budget: The online format did reduce the event costs, as one of the largest budget items (catering) was not required. To ensure continued quality and to facilitate both an in-person and online event it is expected that the 2021 budget will need to increase.

Marketing: Continued expansion of marketing inputs is recommended. Improved media exposure remains important and an unrealised aspect of the Symposium marketing strategy.

Legacy: Built into the program in 2021 needs to be opportunities for enduring resources and learning opportunities.
The Sustainable Schools Network aim to educate and connect school communities to imagine a sustainable future.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION

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