## Evaluation of Our Cool School - Flagship School Program (OCS Program)

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#### Submitted to:

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### **Contents**

Tables	iii
Figures	iv
Executive Summary	v
Overview	1
The Our Cool School – Flagship School Program	1
Context	1
The purpose of the program	1
The evaluation	1
Scope of the evaluation	1
The key evaluation questions	2
Data Collection	3
The instruments	3
Response rates and achieved sample sizes	3
The data	3
Findings	4
Teachers' background	4
Year levels teaching that are involved in the Our Cool School program	4
Number of years teaching	4
Number of hours teach environmental/sustainability education	4
Evaluation questions related to the Our Cool School Program in the school and classroom	5
Program impact on the Curriculum at the whole school level	5
Perception of aims of the program as they apply to classroom teachers	6
The program and the way you teach	6
Evaluation questions related to the Our Cool School website	8
Reasons for using the Our Cool School website	9
Suggested improvements to the Our Cool School website	. 10
Continued use of the Our Cool School website	. 11
Professional judgement of student engagement with the Our Cool School program	. 11
Evaluation questions related to the use of Modules by Classroom Teachers	. 14
Use of the Modules in the classroom	. 15
Module lesson Activity Sheets	. 15

Student (	Outcomes	15
Dev	elopment of skills	16
Cha	nges students have made outside of the school setting	17
	v has the Our Cool School program had an impact on students behaviour at ool	17
Evaluation	on questions related to the Our Cool School program in general	18
_	lity of the link between the Our Cool School teaching Modules and Victorian Essential Learning Standards	18
Sug	gested improvements to the Our Cool School program	18
Surj	prises in the program	18
Oth	er comments	19
Conclusi	on	19
PART II		20
	v of the Our Cool School program Modules and Links to the orian Essential Learning Standards	20
The	VELS levels and the Water Module	20
Appendi	x A: Data collection tools	27
Tables		
Table 1	Year levels teachers teach	4
Table 2	Number of years teaching	4
Table 3	Number of hours teaching environmental/sustainability education	4
Table 4	Rating of quality of teaching of the environment before and after participating in the program	8
Table 5	Teacher professional judgement of their student's knowledge of environmental issues before and after participating in the program	12
Table 6	Example of the Outline and Outcomes of the 'Water' Module	21
Table 7	Examples of 'Water' lesson Activities for students by VELS Level and curriculum subjects covered	22
Table 8	Total VELS Domains and Dimensions in each Module	23
Table 9	Summary of Total VELS Domains and Dimensions in each Module	26

## **Figures**

Figure 1	Teachers reporting the extent to which program has helped them better understand aspects of teaching related to the environment	7
Figure 2	Teachers reporting how good the Our Cool School website is	9
Figure 3	Teachers reporting what they look for on the Our Cool School website	. 10
Figure 4	Teachers reporting students in their class being engaged with the environment	. 12
Figure 5	Teachers reporting their students in their class being engaged with the Our Cool School program	. 13
Figure 6	Teachers reporting how good the Modules are	. 14
Figure 7	Teachers reporting an increase in student learning outcomes as a result of the Our Cool School program	. 16
Figure 8	Teachers reporting an increase in student students' skills to think about and understand the environment	. 17

#### **Executive Summary**

The primary focus of this evaluation report is to investigate selected outcomes of the Our Cool School program at the school level. The evaluation focuses on teacher usage and the ease of use of the on-line resource material for schools, teachers and students. The level of enjoyment derived from participation in and use of the Our Cool School program and changes in student behaviours, knowledge and understanding about environmental issues were also considered.

The majority of teachers participating in the evaluation taught at the primary school level with teachers most frequently teaching Years 3 and 4. Typically, the teachers in the program were experienced and spent over an hour a week teaching in the area of the environment and sustainability.

#### Teachers were very positive about the program:

- Teachers reported an improvement in their teaching of the environment after being involved in the Our Cool School program.
- Teachers indicated students had a positive reaction to the program and the program had positively contributed to their students' educational outcomes.
- Nearly all teachers rated their students' knowledge of the environment as having
  increased since being involved in the Our Cool School program. Teachers
  reported their students were also keen to learn new ideas about how to realise a
  sustainable future.
- According to their teachers, nearly all students looked forward to learning about the environment through the program, and most were more aware of environmental issues as a result of the program.
- Teachers reported students demonstrated an increased level of awareness, knowledge and understanding of issues related to the environment. Students were more conscious of their actions. Students were also actively raising their parent's awareness of how they could as a family all contribute to improving the environment.
- Teachers were very positive in their assessment of the Our Cool School website, with respect to the comprehensiveness of the information, its readability, and the provision of up-to date information.
- Teachers found the teaching Module plans and student activity sheets a valuable classroom resource. The teaching Modules also helped teachers increase their confidence in teaching about the environment.
- Nearly all teachers reported they would continue to use the Our Cool School website and its associated teaching resources.

#### Overview

This report describes the evaluation of the Our Cool School (OCS) – Flagship School Program.

This section provides a description of the Our Cool School program as well as the outcomes it is intended to produce.

#### The Our Cool School – Flagship School Program

The Our Cool School program is currently funded by the Cool Australia Trust.

#### Context

The Cool Australia Trust a Victorian based non-for-profit organisation, established the Our Cool School (OCS) Program in 2008 with the view to giving every young Australian and every educator free access to high quality, world-class educational resources related to the environment and sustainability.

#### The purpose of the program

The Our Cool School program aims to provide teachers with access to high quality, online educational resources on the environment and sustainability. The Our Cool School program provides teachers with teaching modules and learning activities that are intended to be engaging and fun for students. The purpose of the program is to provide innovative on-line learning resources that are year level specific (years 1 to 10) and are linked to the curriculum. The program is also designed so that classroom teachers can incorporate the Our Cool School activities in to many areas of teaching. It is intended to complement existing classroom activities. Overall, the Our Cool School program aims to provide new ideas and to inspire students to help realise a sustainable future.

#### The evaluation

Evaluation of the Our Cool School program was seen by The Cool Australia Trust as being critical for determining whether the program was meeting its intended purposes. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned by the Cool Australia Trust to conduct the evaluation.

#### Scope of the evaluation

The period of the evaluation was from April 2011 to November 2011. The evaluation was intended to investigate selected outcomes of the Our Cool School program at the school level. The evaluation focused on teacher usage and the ease of use of the on-line resource material for schools, teachers and students. The level of enjoyment derived from participation in and use of the Our Cool School program and changes in student behaviours, knowledge and understanding about environmental issues were also considered.

In order to conduct the evaluation ACER:

• Developed a 'Teacher Survey' in consultation with the Cool Australia Trust;

- Collected survey data from teachers who have been involved in the Our Cool School program in 2011;
- Developed a 'Principal Survey' in consultation with the Cool Australia Trust;
- Collected survey data from Principals who have the Our Cool School program in their school in 2011;
- Examined the content of the Our Cool School program teaching Modules to gain an overview of the topics covered including the activities and their link to the Victorian Education Learning Standards (VELS) curriculum areas.

#### The key evaluation questions

The key evaluation questions addressed the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Our Cool School program. Specifically, the evaluation addressed:

- 1. the role the Our Cool School program has played in supporting classroom teachers in their teaching of sustainability through the provision of innovative resources to support teachers,
- 2. the effectiveness of the Our Cool School program in meeting the needs of teachers,
- 3. student engagement with the Our Cool School program,
- 4. student outcomes as a result of the Our Cool School program,
- 5. the effectiveness of the Our Cool School program in achieving its intended outcomes,
- 6. the impact of the Our Cool School program on school practices specifically related to school policy. (Due to four school principals responding to the 'School Principal survey' there was insufficient data for this question to be addressed in the evaluation).
- 7. how could the Our Cool School program be improved to better meet the needs of teachers.
- 8. the effectiveness of incorporating of the Our Cool School program activities into other teaching areas.

#### **Data Collection**

#### The instruments

Data collection involved:

- A posted self-completed 'Teacher Survey'. The survey was designed to be completed by all staff who are involved in the Our Cool School Flagship program. The survey comprised 36 questions. It included a combination of Likert-scale items and open-ended questions. The 'Teacher Survey' is included as 'Attachment A'.
- A posted self-completed 'Principal Survey'. The survey was designed to be completed by the School Principal or a designated member of staff. The survey comprised 20 questions. It included a combination of Likert-scale items and open ended questions. The 'Principal Survey' is included as 'Attachment B.

#### Response rates and achieved sample sizes

Eight schools were invited to participate in the Our Cool School evaluation. These were all schools that were involved in the program in 2011. All schools agreed to participate in the evaluation. Each school was asked to indicate the number of staff at their school who would be willing to complete a survey. In total 42 surveys were distributed to schools (average: 5 surveys per school, range: three to seven surveys). A total of 21 surveys were completed representing a 50 per cent response rate. Of the eight participating schools surveys were received from four Principals.

#### The data

Twenty-one classroom teachers responded to the survey. Due to the low response rate from an already small population, caution should be exercised in the use of findings taken from them. Percentages have been reported in the body of the report for ease of reading. Responses from principals have been incorporated into the body of the report. In addition the wording of some of the survey item response categories within the report have been changed from those used in the survey. This has been done for ease of reading. The survey instruments appended to this report remain as they were administered to teachers and principals.

#### **Findings**

#### Teachers' background

Teachers were asked four questions about their background in teaching.

Of all survey respondents 13 teachers taught at Primary schools 5 taught at Secondary schools and three taught at an 'Other' school.

#### Year levels teaching that are involved in the Our Cool School program

Teachers were asked what year levels they teach that are involved in the Our Cool School program.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of the year levels teachers taught. Years 3 and 4 were the year levels most commonly taught.

Table 1 Year levels teachers teach

									 Year 10 (%)	
5	5%	5%	38%	38%	19%	19%	10%	10%	 5%	14%

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 as some teachers taught more than one Year level.

#### Number of years teaching

Teachers were also asked about the number of years they had been teaching.

Table 2 shows the number of years teachers reported they had been teaching. On average, teachers were experienced, with around 14 years in the classroom.

**Table 2** Number of years teaching

School Type	Mean Years	Minimum Years	Maximum Years
Primary	14.62 years	4 years	25 years
Secondary	13.38 years	2 years	26 years

#### Number of hours teach environmental/sustainability education

Table 3 shows the number of hours teachers reported teaching environmental/sustainability education at the primary and secondary level. On average the teachers spent over an hour a week teaching environmental/sustainability education.

Table 3 Number of hours teaching environmental/sustainability education

School Type	Mean Hours	Minimum Hours	Maximum Hours
Primary	1.92 hours	1	5
Secondary	3.14 hours	2	5

#### **SECTION SUMMARY**

The majority of teachers participating in the evaluation taught at the primary school level with teachers most frequently teaching Years 3 and 4. Typically, the teachers in the program were experienced and spent over an hour a week teaching in the area of the environment and sustainability. This indicates that they were well placed to be reliable informants for the evaluation.

## Evaluation questions related to the Our Cool School Program in the school and classroom

#### Program impact on the Curriculum at the whole school level

Because only four school principals responded to the 'School Principal' survey only an overview can be provided that focuses on some of the survey questions.

Three of the four principals reported they 'agreed' that the Our Cool School program had played a part in increasing the environmental and sustainability content in the school's curriculum. All responding principals 'agreed' the program had had an impact on providing increased environmental learning opportunities and programs for students. It had also encouraged the design of subject units or projects around the needs or related to the location of the school. The principals also 'agreed' the program had encouraged teachers to assess what students learn about the environment.

The principals all 'agreed' the Our Cool School program had raised their students' awareness of the environment, increased students' environmental knowledge and skills. Principals also noted they had observed a change in student's attitudes to actively thinking about environmental issues. In general the program had got students to think about the impact of their own behaviour on the environment.

Principals reported the Our Cool School program had helped to incorporate Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS)<sup>1</sup> in to teaching about the environment. Schools reported teaching about the environment in the curriculum areas of English, Health and Physical Education, Science, Interpersonal Development, the Humanities – Geography, Civics and Citizenship, ICT and Thinking processes.

When asked to rate their school in terms of environmental awareness <u>before</u> and then <u>after</u> participating in the Our Cool School program on an 8-point scale (1= 'Low' to 8= 'High'). A one point increase is the equivalent to 12.5 percentage points. All four

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) outlines what is essential for all Victorian students to learn during their time at school from Prep to Year 10. They provide a set of common state-wide standards which schools use to plan student learning programs, assess student progress and report to parents. The VELS is based on best practice in Victorian schools and draws on national and international research about how students learn. The VELS differ from traditional curricula by including knowledge and skills in the areas of physical, social and personal learning. Skills which are transferable across all areas of study such as thinking and communication are also included. The VELS curriculum encourages a flexible and creative approach to learning." From: <a href="http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/">http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/</a> viewed November 2011.

principals reported an increase in the school's environmental awareness. The increases were between – one or two points (12.5% and 25%).

#### Perception of aims of the program as they apply to classroom teachers

Teachers were asked to describe the main aims of the Our Cool School program as they applied to them. This question provided an opportunity to gauge the level of understanding that teachers had of the program, and the extent to which the program's aims and objectives have been communicated to them.

Teachers described the main aims of the program as an opportunity for them to develop a better understanding of the environment and increase their knowledge of teaching environmental issues. Teachers saw the program as a way of helping build students awareness of sustainability. Teachers also saw the program as an opportunity to help their students develop a conscience with respect to understanding the impact they have on the environment. The program was also described as a way to explore environmental themes and to show students how they can work towards protecting their environment, for example by reducing their 'ecological footprint'.

Teachers also liked being able to introduce their students to concepts related to the environment using age appropriate material. Teachers noted that the program resources allowed them to provide engaging learning activities to their students. Teachers also commented on the benefits of being able to provide their students with current up-to-date articles and information. In general teachers felt the Our Cool School website provided a comprehensive central source of information for students to access. Teachers reported the Our Cool School website was an excellent resource that complemented their other resources, and made it easy to incorporate lessons on environmental issues regularly into their programs across subject areas.

Overall, 71 per cent of teachers reported they perceived the aims of the Our Cool School program were 'good' at addressing their needs, while 14 per cent of teachers felt the program was 'great' at addressing their needs.

#### The program and the way you teach

Teachers were asked to describe how their involvement in the Our Cool School program had made a difference in the way they teach.

They saw it as having a positive impact on their knowledge and awareness of environmental issues. They felt better prepared and were more confident to teach about different environmental issues.

Teachers commented the program had helped them to think more about the way they teach environmental issues and how they plan their teaching of specific topics. Teachers felt they were better able to formulate and organise their teaching approach so as to systematically cover topics. The majority of teachers also commented that the Our Cool School website had played an important part in providing them with an excellent teaching resource that had a diverse range of activities that were fun and engaging for their students. Teachers were also pleased the program encouraged students to actively investigate and locate information independently. The teaching modules and activities were considered very user-friendly and catered for students of varying ages and abilities.

Teachers regarded the website as a reliable and informative resource they could refer to when developing their lesson plans.

Teachers were also asked to rate the extent to which having been involved in the Our Cool School program has helped them better understand various aspects of environmental teaching and learning at their school on a scale (1= 'Poor' to 4= 'Great').

Figure 1 shows the percentage of teachers reporting how the program had helped increase their understanding of various aspects of teaching related to the environment.

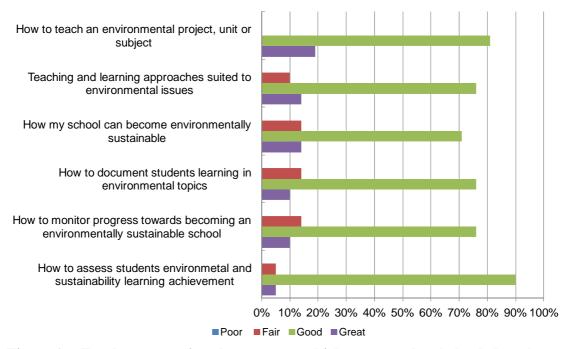


Figure 1 Teachers reporting the extent to which program has helped them better understand aspects of teaching related to the environment

Figure 1 shows that most teachers reported the program as 'good' in helping them better understand aspects of teaching about the environment and sustainability.

Teachers were also asked to rate the quality of their teaching of the environment <u>before</u> participating in the Our Cool School program on an 8-point scale (1= 'Low' to 8 = 'High') and then rate the quality of their teaching of the environment <u>after</u> participating in the program. A one point increase is the equivalent to 12.5 percentage points.

Table 4 shows teachers self-ratings of their quality of teaching of the environment before and after participating in the program.

Table 4 Rating of quality of teaching of the environment before and after participating in the program

		Rating
Quality of Teac	hing Rating	Before to After the program
No change	(= 00.0%)	14% of teachers
Increased by one point	(= 12.5%)	48% of teachers
Increased by 2 points	(= 25.0%)	33% of teachers
Increased by 3 points	(= 37.5%)	5% of teachers

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 4 shows that 38 per cent of teachers reported the quality of their teaching of the environment had improved by two or more rating points (25% or more) after having been involved in the Our Cool School program. Only 14 per cent of teachers reported the quality of their teaching had not changed. This indicates that the program is improving the quality of teaching of the environment as a result of teachers participating in it.

#### **SECTION SUMMARY**

Overall teacher's perceptions of the main aims of the program as they specifically applied to them were very positive. Teachers were also positive in their assessment of the age appropriateness of the teaching modules and associated teaching resources. Teachers also rated an improvement in their teaching of the environment after being involved in the program.

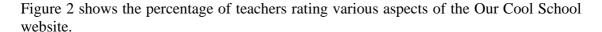
#### **Evaluation questions related to the Our Cool School website**

This section addresses the eight questions asked of teachers related to the Our Cool School website. These questions were designed to establish how teachers perceive they have benefited from the use of the website during the program.

All teachers reported having had access to the Our Cool School website. Teachers were asked how often they had used the Our Cool School website in the last 12 months. Fifty-two pr cent of teachers reported they had used the website 'About once every couple of weeks', while 29 per cent of teachers reported using the website 'About once a week' or 'More than once a week'. Only 10 per cent of teachers reported using the website 'About once a Term'.

In terms of how useful the website was, 52 per cent of teachers reported the website was 'useful' while 24 per cent reported the website was 'very useful'. This indicates the Our Cool School website is viewed by teachers as a useful resource.

Teachers were asked how good they considered the Our Cool School website on a scale (1= 'Very poor' to 4= 'Very good').



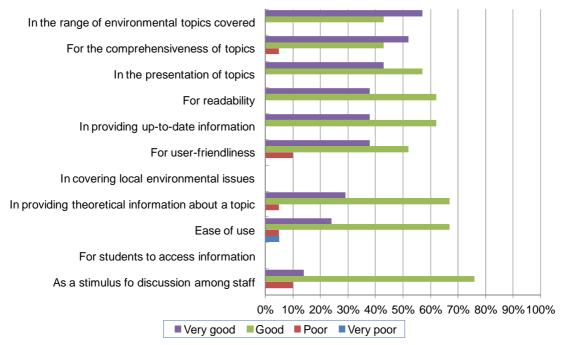


Figure 2 Teachers reporting how good the Our Cool School website is

Figure 2 shows most teachers rated the Our Cool School website highly. For example, all teachers rated the range of environmental topics covered to be 'good' or very good' while 95 per cent of teachers rated the comprehensiveness of topics to be 'good' or 'very good'.

#### Reasons for using the Our Cool School website

Teachers were asked what kind of information they looked for on the Our Cool School website. The responses to this question enabled the main uses of the website to be identified. Areas of particular need teachers have in developing their environmental teaching skills could also be identified.

Figure 3 shows the number of teachers reporting the type of information they look for on the Our Cool School website.

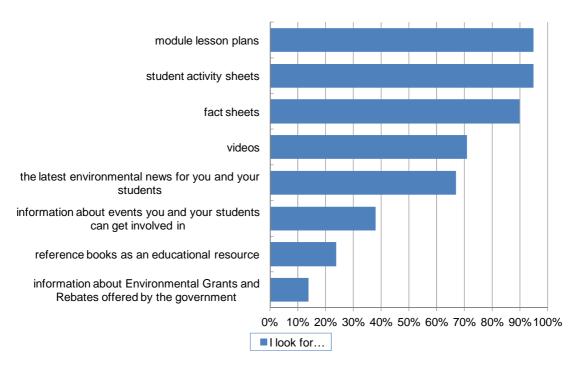


Figure 3 Teachers reporting what they look for on the Our Cool School website

Nearly all of the teachers (95%) reported using the Our Cool School website to look for module lesson plans and student activity sheets. Ninety per cent of teachers also reported looking for Fact Sheets as a teaching aid. Thus, teachers tended to use the website for locating material they could take into the classroom directly relevant to their teaching. They were less likely to use the website for information about the environment that was not classroom based, for example 38 per cent of teachers reported using the website to locate information about possible events they or their students could attend.

#### Suggested improvements to the Our Cool School website

Teachers were asked what would most improve the website. Teachers' comments typically related to navigation around the website. Teachers felt the website contained a lot of information and it was difficult for younger students to navigate. Younger students experienced difficulties searching for information because information was spread over a number of locations and they were required to click on a number of links to get to a specific topic.

Teachers suggested there needed to be clearer or easier links between the location of the information and related activity sheets. It was also suggested introducing blogging and chat room forums so staff and students could interact and share ideas with each other from different schools. Teachers also suggested more interactive activities for use on interactive white boards. Some of the language in the information presented and the activity sheets needed to be simplified to cater for students who are not strong readers. Teachers suggested that easier activities for younger students be provided. They recommended, for example, activities related to the performing arts (songs and rhymes). There also needs to be a variation in the type of activities provided.

Teachers also observed that the links to some web pages needed to be checked as they did not always work or they linked to the wrong site.

#### Continued use of the Our Cool School website

The majority (86%) of teachers reported that they would continue to use the Our Cool School website to assist in their teaching about the environment over the next 12 months.

Teachers indicated they would continue to use the website because it was very user-friendly providing an excellent range of topics and activities that were easy to use in class. Teachers also described the website as an excellent resource, and the associated modules and activity sheets as helpful in their lesson planning and teaching. Teachers reported that their students found the activities engaging, motivating and enjoyable. Teachers also liked how the information presented was current, innovative and kept up to date. Thus, teachers saw the website as an excellent resource that complemented their own teaching resources.

#### **SECTION SUMMARY**

Teachers were very positive in their assessment of the Our Cool School website. They commented positively on the range of topics covered, the comprehensiveness of the information, its readability, the provision of up-to date information, and its ease of use.

Teachers most frequently used the website to access teaching module plans and student activity sheets. Nearly all teachers reported they would continue to use the Our Cool School website.

#### Professional judgement of student engagement with the Our Cool School program

This section addresses the three questions asked of teachers about student engagement with the program.

Teachers were asked to assess their students' knowledge of environmental issues <u>before</u> and <u>after</u> participating in the Our Cool School program on an 8-point scale (1= 'Low' to 8= 'High'). A one point increase is the equivalent to 12.5 percentage points.

Table 5 shows teachers ratings (based on their professional judgement) of their students' knowledge of environmental issues before and after participating in the program.

Table 5 Teacher professional judgement of their student's knowledge of environmental issues before and after participating in the program

		Rating
Teacher Rating of Students		Students Before to After the program
No change	(= 00.0%)	5% of students
Increased by one point	(= 12.5%)	28% of students
Increased by 2 points	(= 25.0%)	24% of students
Increased by 3 points	(= 37.5%)	33% of students
Increased by 4 points	(= 50.0%)	10% of students

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 5 shows that 95 per cent of teachers rated their student's knowledge of the environment as having increased since being involved in the Our Cool School program. Forty-three per cent of teachers rated their students' knowledge of environmental issues as having increased by three or more points after having been involved in the program. This indicates that students' knowledge of environmental issues had increased as a result of participating in the program.

Figure 4 shows the extent to which teachers agreed with various statements about how their students respond to environmental and related issues.

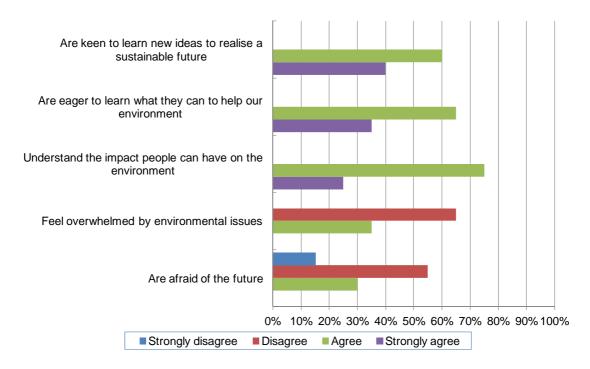


Figure 4 Teachers reporting students in their class being engaged with the environment

Figure 4 shows forty per cent of teachers 'strongly agreed' that the students in their class are keen to learn new ideas about how to realise a sustainable future, while 35 per cent of teachers 'strongly agreed' the students in their class are eager to learn what they can to help our environment. On the whole teachers see their students as being engaged with environmental issues. However, there appears to be a risk that these issues are overwhelming some students.

Figure 5 shows the extent to which teachers agreed with aspects of the Our Cool School program as they applied to their students.

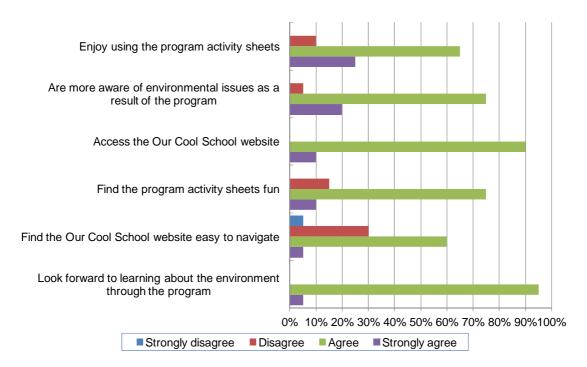


Figure 5 Teachers reporting their students in their class being engaged with the Our Cool School program

Figure 5 shows 95 per cent of classroom teachers 'agreed' the students in their class look forward to learning about the environment through the Our Cool School program. Similarly 75 per cent of classroom teachers 'agreed' the students in their class are more aware of environmental issues as a result of the program.

Twenty-five per cent of teachers 'strongly agreed' and 65 per cent of teachers 'agreed' that their students enjoy using the Our Cool School program activity sheets. In addition, 10 per cent of teachers 'strongly agreed' and 75 per cent 'agreed' the students in their class found the program activity sheets fun.

Sixty per cent of teachers 'agreed' the website was easy for their students to navigate, while 30 per cent of teachers reported they 'disagreed' and five per cent 'strongly disagreed' the website was easy to navigate'. Thus some teachers had concerns about the ease with which the students navigate the Our Cool School website.

#### SECTION SUMMARY

Ninety-five per cent of teacher rated their student's knowledge of the environment as having increased since being involved in the Our Cool School program. Teachers reported their students were keen to learn new ideas about how to realise a sustainable future. Teachers also reported that there appears to be a risk that environmental issues are overwhelming some students. Teachers reported students had a positive reaction to the Our Cool School program. Students enjoyed using the program activity sheets and found them fun, were more aware of environmental issues as a result of the program, and looked forward to learning about the environment through the program.

#### **Evaluation questions related to the use of Modules by Classroom Teachers**

This section addresses the six questions asked of teachers related to the Our Cool School Modules. These questions asked about how teachers benefited from the use of the Modules during the program and how helpful they have been. All teachers reported having used the Modules.

Figure 6 shows the extent to which teachers rated various aspects of the Our Cool School Modules.

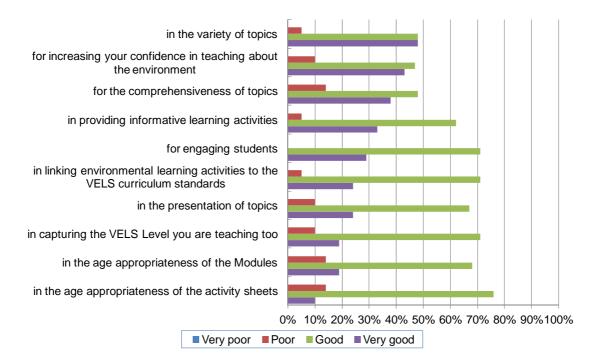


Figure 6 Teachers reporting how good the Modules are ...

Figure 6 shows that the Modules were viewed by these teachers as a valuable teaching resource. For example, they all reported that they were good for engaging students and the Module topics were comprehensive. The Modules also helped increase teacher confidence in teaching about the environment.

#### Use of the Modules in the classroom

Teachers were asked which Our Cool School Module topic they believed their students most engaged with. (All teachers had only used one teaching Module at the time of the evaluation.)

Thirty-eight per cent of teachers reported they felt their students were most engaged by the 'Water Module' because of the hands-on nature of the activities. They said that students were particularly engaged with activities that involved them applying in real life what they had learned in class. For example, students were able to relate to and compare the activities in the 'Water Module' to their own life experiences at school and at home.

Other teaching Modules cited by teachers as being engaging for students included those covering the topics of wildlife, the environment, and Antarctica. Again the practical hands-on nature of the activities of these modules was important for engaging the students.

#### Module lesson Activity Sheets

Teachers were asked to nominate the Activity sheet that they felt their students most enjoyed and to explain why. For the 'Water Module', teachers reported their students most enjoyed the 'water cycle' activity, because it was a hands-on activity. Teachers noted their students were excited about making their own water cycle and watching the seeds grow. Students responded well to activities that gave them the chance to use their new knowledge to come up with creative solutions to problems. Teachers of students in Year 1 and 2 reported their students most enjoyed the 'N is for nature' activity related to the 'Environment Module', because it allowed them to be creative. At the same time the teachers valued the flexibility of the activity. It allowed the students to either complete the activity as a colouring-in task, or draw their own 'N' and then draw items in nature. This Module also provided the option of the class going for a walk around the school looking for items and then drawing in their letter 'N' those things which they had seen.

Typically, teachers liked the creative and flexible nature of the Activity sheets. They also liked how they could modify an activity to best meet the ability levels of their students and their interests.

#### **SECTION SUMMARY**

Teachers saw the Our Cool School program teaching Modules as useful. They were very positive about the teaching Modules because of the variety of topics covered and their comprehensive detail. Teachers also felt the teaching Modules helped increase their confidence in teaching about the environment. Teachers found the content of the teaching Modules to be engaging for their students and were age appropriate.

#### **Student Outcomes**

This section considers the five questions asked of teachers about experiences and achievements of their students generated by the Our Cool School program. Typically, teachers responded positively to the impact of the program on student outcomes. This can be seen in Figure 7.

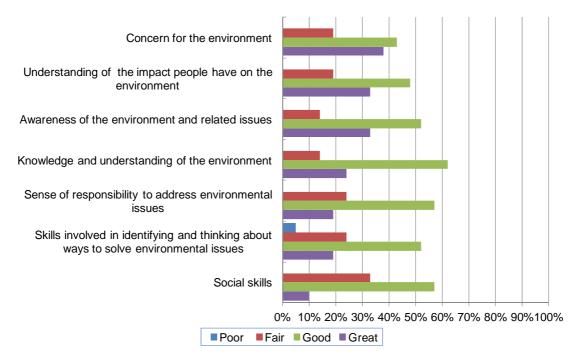


Figure 7 Teachers reporting an increase in student learning outcomes as a result of the Our Cool School program

Figure 7 shows teachers found the students in their class as a result of participating in the Our Cool School program had demonstrated an increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the environment and environmental issues.

#### Development of skills

Teachers were asked about the extent to which the Our Cool School program has increased students' ability to think about and understand the environment and the impact of human behaviour and their own on the environment. These questions also tapped the extent to which the Our Cool School program plays a part in stimulating students to think about the environment. As Figure 8 shows, teachers saw the program as having a positive effect. Eighty-five per cent of teachers 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the Our Cool School program had increased students thinking ability about the environment. For example, 95 per cent of teachers 'agreed' or 'strongly agree' that the Our Cool School program had increased their students understanding of the impact people can have on the environment.

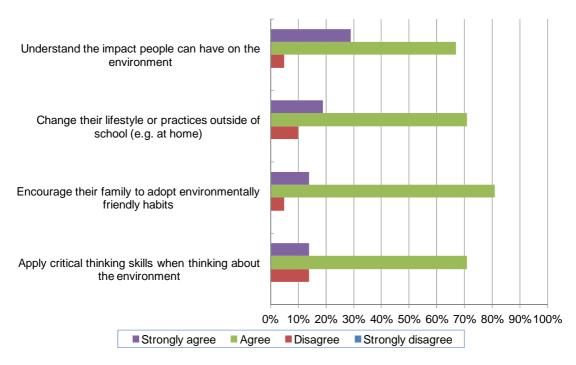


Figure 8 Teachers reporting an increase in student students' skills to think about and understand the environment

#### Changes students have made outside of the school setting

Teachers were asked to provide an example of how the Our Cool School program had influenced students to make changes outside of the school setting to help the environment.

Teachers reported their students had become more aware of their own and their family's personal impact on the environment. For example, students were encouraging their families to turn off lights when they were not in a room, and closing doors to keep heat in. Students were also encouraging their parents and siblings to save and recycle water, by having shorter showers, turning off dripping taps, watering their garden with grey water and encouraging their families to compost. Students were also discussing with their parent's ways they could all become more environmentally friendly. It is clear that students were keen to apply what they had learned in class in their home.

# How has the Our Cool School program had an impact on students behaviour at school Teachers were asked how the Our Cool School program has had an impact on student's behaviour at school.

Teachers reported their students had shown a heightened awareness and concern for the environment. Students were showing a greater appreciation of identifying items that they could recycle. For example, they were actively reducing waste and sorting rubbish. Students were making a conscious effort not to litter in the playground and to reduce rubbish by minimising lunch wrappings, recycled paper was being put in recycled bins and students were not printing unnecessary information off the internet. Teachers also reported that students were also showing an increased awareness of water wastage.

Students reported to teachers if they found leaking or dripping taps and placed ice-cream containers under taps. Students were also conscious of keeping doors closed in the winter months so as to keep the warmth in.

#### **SECTION SUMMARY**

Typically, teachers reported that the Our Cool School program had contributed to their student's educational outcomes. Teachers reported students in their class demonstrated an increased level of awareness, knowledge and understanding of issues related to the environment. Students were more conscious of their actions and were actively recycling paper, water and energy at school. In addition students were actively raising their parent's awareness of how they could as a family all contribute to improving the environment.

#### Evaluation questions related to the Our Cool School program in general

This section addresses the four questions asked of teachers related to the Our Cool School program in general.

## Quality of the link between the Our Cool School teaching Modules and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Teachers were asked to rate the quality of the link between the Our Cool School program teaching modules and the VEL Standards. Overall, 71 per cent of teachers rated the link as 'good', with the remaining teachers rating the link as 'great'. (The link between the teaching modules and the VELS are explored further in Part 11 of the evaluation report.)

An aim of the Our Cool School program is "to make teaching and learning about the environment as easy as possible". Teachers were asked to rate their level of agreement with this statement. Fifty-four per cent of teachers responded they agreed 'to a major extent' with the statement.

#### Suggested improvements to the Our Cool School program

Teachers most commonly cited suggestion to improve the program was related to the website. They felt that website navigation needed to be improved and made simpler, especially for younger students. It was noted that parents sometimes found it difficult to locate information or follow the links to something their child had been doing at school that day. Some teachers commented that links did not always work which made it difficult, especially if they were running a class.

Other improvements suggested included more interesting and attractive looking worksheets, for example more hands on interactive activities, songs, poems and rhymes and a list of good picture story books to read with each module.

#### Surprises in the program

Teachers were asked to provide examples of any aspect of the program that had surprised them in either a positive or negative way. This question is designed to identify any unintended consequences of the program. None were identified. Instead, teachers reported they were pleasantly surprised at how comprehensive and informative the

information on the website was and how up-to-date it is. They were also impressed with the quality, layout and presentation of the information on the website. Teachers were very pleased with the quality of the teaching modules. They commented favourably on the help given by staff at Cool Australia in planning lessons and suggesting activity sheets to complement the teaching modules.

#### Other comments

Teachers were given an opportunity to provide further comments about the program on the questionnaire. Nearly all comments were positive and reflected information given in other parts of the questionnaire.

#### **SECTION SUMMARY**

Teachers were very satisfied with the program. They felt the link between the contents of the program and the VEL Standards was good. Teachers were pleasantly surprised by the comprehensiveness of the information on the website. Teachers were impressed with how up-to-date and current the information was.

Teachers were appreciative of the support they received from staff at Cool Australia.

#### Conclusion

Teachers who participated in the evaluation of the Our Cool School program were positive and enthusiastic toward the program. Our Cool School program seems to have played a significant role in supporting teachers in their teaching about the environment. It has done so through the provision of a high quality informative and comprehensive website. Teachers felt as a result of their participation in the program and access to the teaching Modules their level of knowledge and the quality of their teaching about the environment had increased. Similarly, students' knowledge of environmental issues had also increased as a result of participation in the program.

On the basis of the responses received from the 21 teachers who participated in the evaluation it would appear that the Our Cool School program is effectively meeting a need within those schools participating in the program. The delivery of the program in the classroom is having a positive impact on students through increasing students' awareness of environmental issues and engaging them in learning about environmental issues. Students are also thinking more broadly about environmental issues, and seem to be taking what they have learned in the classroom and applying it at home.

The Our Cool School program material appears to be pitched at an appropriate level for students and is presented in a user-friendly way. Teachers reported students enjoyed using the activity sheets and were enthusiastic about the variety of innovative and creative activities and investigations they completed in class.

The most frequently cited improvement for the program was a need for the website to be made more navigation friendly particularly for younger students.

#### **PART II**

# Overview of the Our Cool School program Modules and Links to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards

The teaching Modules and learning activities developed by Cool Australia are designed to be year level specific catering for students in year 1 to 10. Teaching Modules and activities have been developed to be aligned to link to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (level 2 to 6), including physical, personal and social learning. This part of the report investigates the linkage between the program Modules and the VELS. It also describes the range of curriculum areas covered, and the teaching activities provided. This may be of value to the Cool Australia Trust in a range of settings. It is not intended to be seen as part of the evaluation.

The linkages are explored by focusing upon the 'Water' teaching Module. This Module was selected as it was most commonly cited by classroom teachers as engaging students. With the 'Water' Module students are encouraged to reflect on the ways that we need and use water. Younger students focus on the relationship between human behaviour and water conservation, while older students consider water as an environmental, social, political and ethical issue<sup>2</sup>.

#### The VELS levels and the Water Module

Table 6 provides an example of how the 'Water' 'Outlines' and 'Outcomes' for the module are linked at each VELS level.<sup>3</sup> Highlighted text in the table illustrates the key terms that show the progression through each VELS stage. At Level 2 students move from being introduced to basic concepts to thinking about what they can do, then exploring multiple issues and relationships between factors. By the time students reach Level 5 they are required to think about their actions and how they impact on others, they also engage in class discussions. At Level 6 students are thinking critically, and further exploring their own understanding of issues. Students are encouraged to question and develop recommendations based on their developing informed knowledge.

The 'Outcomes' defined at each of the VELS levels provide a set of consistent learning themes addressing student understanding, responsibility and opportunity. As a result students are not merely learning facts they are being encouraged to develop an awareness and understanding that they can apply outside of the classroom across a range of settings.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Water Module. from Our Cool School website, <a href="http://www.ourcoolschool.org/our-environment/water/viewed">http://www.ourcoolschool.org/our-environment/water/viewed</a> November 2011.

Water Module Year level Outlines and Outcomes, viewed November, 2011. http://www.ourcoolschool.org/articles/2010/10/water-classroom-activities-grades-1-and-2/http://www.ourcoolschool.org/articles/2010/10/water-classroom-activities-grades-3-and-4/http://www.ourcoolschool.org/articles/2011/01/water-classroom-activities-grades-5-and-6/http://www.ourcoolschool.org/articles/2010/10/water-classroom-activities-grades-7-and-8/http://www.ourcoolschool.org/articles/2010/10/water-classroom-activities-grades-9-and-10/

Table 6 Example of the Outline and Outcomes of the 'Water' Module<sup>4</sup>

VELS Level	OUTLINE of 'Water Module'	OUTCOMES of 'Water Module'
Level 2	Students are asked to <b>share their understanding</b> of their relationship to water. <b>Introduces</b> students to the <b>basics of the water cycle</b> by building one in the classroom. Students are <b>encouraged to think</b> about when and where they can save water, and <b>the importance of</b> water on their environment.	Students will have an <b>understanding</b> that water is valuable to all life all earth and we all have a <b>responsibility</b> to save it.
Level 3	Students are encouraged to think about how water use might affect our environment and what they can do about it. In particular, students will be given the chance to think about the water use of their home or school, and how they can help their school or home use less water.	Students <b>understand</b> that we all have a <b>responsibility</b> to save water, and that saving water is easy. There are simple things we can all do to save water, either at home or at school.
Level 4	Students <b>explore multiple issues</b> relating to water, including how they much they use, what sort of <b>impact</b> that their use has on the environment, how we can use less water, and <b>the relationship</b> between bottled water and the health of our environment.	Water is a huge issue, easily as important as climate change and biodiversity loss. Students <b>understand</b> that we all have a <b>responsibility</b> to save water, and that saving water is easy. There are simple things we can do to save water, either at home or at school.
Level 5	Students are asked to think about the actions they can take to reduce their water use, and in particular how they can influence others to do the same. Students engage in discussions around the freshwater situation in Victoria and Australia, how we use the wastewater in our homes and schools, and how bottled water is shaping up to being a huge environmental problem. Students are also asked to design a water safety and conservation education program for younger students.	There are many <b>opportunities</b> to use water more wisely, but at the moment we are wasting many of these opportunities and as a result, are wasting water. Using the <b>knowledge</b> that we have about water saving actions, we should <b>create opportunities</b> for <b>sharing this knowledge</b> with other people at our school and in our community.
Level 6	Students are encouraged to think critically about the freshwater situation in Australia, and more particularly, the freshwater situation in Victoria. Students are asked to explore their own understandings of these issues and to engage in activities that question government responses to the freshwater crisis, and make their own recommendations for how our state and country should be addressing this crisis. In addition, students will be asked to explore the growing issue of bottled water and how this impacts upon our environment.	Water is one of our most precious resources, and yet it is also one of our most wasted resources. We need to be aware of how we use water, and what options are available to us for saving water in the future.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Table 7 provides an overview of the types of lesson activities for each VELS level within the 'Water' Module. It also shows curriculum areas covered at each level.

Table 7 Examples of 'Water' lesson Activities for students by VELS Level and curriculum subjects covered<sup>5</sup>

VELS Level	Examples of 'Water' lesson activities with VELS covered
Level 2	Through class discussion and independent art and writing exercises, this activity introduces students to the basics of water and its importance to humans and the environment. (English, The Arts, Civics and citizenship, ICT, Thinking Processes). A colouring-in sheet of the letter 'W' filled with images around the theme of water. (The Arts)
Level 3	Using a worksheet with six clock faces set at different times, students are asked to think about what they can do to save water at different times of the day. (Civics and Citizenship).
	Students undertake a survey of all the places at their school where they can access water to find out whether water is being wasted in any of these places, and what can be done to stop this waste. (Interpersonal Development, Civics and Citizenship, The Humanities).
Level 4	Students are asked to consider and calculate the amount of water that they use over one day. They are then asked to think about how they could reduce their water consumption. (Civics and Citizenship, Geography, Mathematics).  Students design water education posters and present them to younger students at their school. (English, The Arts, Communication).
Level 5	Students map the water use of their school or home, establishing where water is used or wasted and what quantity of water is needed in various points to meet the needs of the water use of that particular point. (The Arts, Geography, Civics and Citizenship). Working in teams students undertake an audit of all the leaking taps or dripping toilets at their school. They will calculate the amount of water wasted in a day/week/month/year and present these findings to their school council or principal. (Interpersonal Development, Mathematics, Civics and Citizenship).
Level 6	Students explore the concept of life-cycle analysis through looking at the life-cycle of bottled water. This will require students to think critically about all the obvious and hidden environmental or social impacts of bottled water, from its manufacture through to its final stages as waste. (Science, Thinking Processes, Communication). Through class discussion and independent and group exercises, students are asked to think about the state of our fresh water resources, how we use water, and what we can do to use less. (English, Thinking Processes).

Table 7 shows some of the diverse range of activities students can work through at each VELS level of the 'Water' Module. The 'Water' Module is also a good example of the wide range of curriculum areas that learning activities related to environmental issues can be linked to.

Table 8 provides an overview of the VELS curriculum areas covered within each of the eight teaching Modules. The frequency of curriculum areas covered in each Module was counted. This was done separately for each VELS level. Curriculum areas were then ranked in order of their frequency of occurrence across the eight Module topic areas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid.

**Table 8** Total VELS Domains and Dimensions in each Module

	Our	Climate		Wildlife and	Energy in			Arctic and	
	Environment	Change	Water	Forests	Victoria	Food	Pollution	Antarctica	Total
Level 2 (Years 1 – 2)									_
The Arts – Creating and Making	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
English - Writing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
English – Speaking and Listening	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
English – Reading		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Humanities learning experiences	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Design, Creativity and Technology learning experiences	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		7
Thinking Processes learning experiences	1	1	1	1			1	1	6
Information and Communication Technology			1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Science learning experiences			1		1		1	1	4
Civics and Citizenship learning experiences	1		1		1		1		4
Mathematics – Number				1	1	1		1	4
Mathematics – Space	1		1			1			3
Interpersonal Development – Working in Teams			1	1	1				3
Mathematics – Measurement					1		1		2
Mathematics – Chance and Data					1		1		2
Health, Physical Education – Movement and Physical Activity		1							1
Health, Physical Education – Health Promotion and Development lea	rning experiences					1			1
Total VELS Domains and Dimensions in Modules	8	7	12	10	13	10	12	9	
Level 3 (Years 3 – 4)									
English – Reading	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
English - Writing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Interpersonal Development – Working in Teams	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Civics and Citizenship – Civic knowledge and understanding	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
The Arts – Creating and Making	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Humanities – Humanities knowledge and understanding	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		7
Science – Science knowledge and understanding		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Thinking Processes – Reflection, evaluation and meta-cognition	1	1	1	1	1	1			6
Civics and Citizenship – Community engagement	1		1	1	1	1	1		6
Communication learning experiences	1		1	1	1	1			5
Science – Science at work		1		1	1		1		4
Mathematics – Number	1		1		1				3
Humanities – Humanities skills	1		1	1					3
Thinking Processes – Reasoning processing and inquiry	<u> </u>		1	1		1			3

	Our	Climate		Wildlife and	Energy in			Arctic and	
	Environment	Change	Water	Forests	Victoria	Food	Pollution	Antarctica	Total
Mathematics – Measurement		1			1				2
Mathematics – Chance and Data		1			1				2
Health, Physical Education – Maintain a good health and live a healthy	lifestyle				1	1			2
Total VELS Domains and Dimensions in Modules	11	11	13	13	15	12	9	6	
Level 4 (Years 5 – 6)									
Humanities – Geography – Geographical knowledge and understanding	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Thinking Processes – Reasoning processing and inquiry	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Interpersonal Development – Working in Teams	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
English – Reading		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Civics and Citizenship – Community engagement	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	7
The Arts – Creating and Making		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
ICT – ICT for Communicating	1	1		1	1	1		1	6
English – Speaking and Listening				1	1		1	1	4
Mathematics – Number				1	1	1	1		4
Science – Science knowledge and understanding		1		1	1		1		4
Thinking Processes – Creativity	1				1	1	1		4
Humanities – History – Historical knowledge and understanding		1		1		1			3
Humanities – Economics – Economic knowledge and understanding	1		1			1			3
Communication – Presenting	1	1			1				3
Science – Science at work					1	1			2
Communication – Listening, viewing and responding						1		1	2
Health and Physical Education – Health knowledge and promotion					1	1			2
Mathematics – Measurement						1			1
Mathematics – Chance and Data						1			1
Mathematics – Space			1						1
Humanities – Humanities knowledge and understanding					1				1
Design, Creativity and Technology – Investigating and designing					1				1
Total VELS Domains and Dimensions in Modules	8	10	8	11	16	15	10	9	
Level 5 (Years 7 – 9)									
English – Reading	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
English – Writing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Humanities – Geography – Geographical knowledge and									
understanding	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Thinking Processes – Reasoning processing and inquiry	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Thinking Processes – Creativity	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8

	Our	Climate		Wildlife and	Energy			Arctic and	
Civile and Ciking him. Community and an artist of the community of the com	Environment	Change	Water	Forests	Victoria	Food	Pollution	Antarctica	Total
Civics and Citizenship – Community engagement	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Science – Science knowledge and understanding	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	7
Interpersonal Development – Working in Teams	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		7
The Arts – Creating and Making	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		7
Mathematics – Number			1	1	1		1		4
Humanities – History – Historical knowledge and understanding	1	1		1	1				4
ICT – ICT for Communicating	1			1	1	1			4
Interpersonal Development – Building social relationships				1	1			1	3
Communication – Listening, viewing and responding			1	1	1				3
Humanities – History – Historical reasoning and interpretation				1					1
Design, Creativity and Technology – Investigating and designing					1				1
Design, Creativity and Technology – Analysing and evaluating					1				1
Health and Physical Education – Health knowledge and promotion						1			1
Total VELS Domains and Dimensions in Modules	11	10	10	15	16	11	10	8	
Level 6 (Year 9 – 10)									
English – Reading	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
English – Writing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Thinking Processes – Reasoning processing and inquiry	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	7
Thinking Processes – Creativity	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	7
Humanities – Economics – Economic knowledge and understanding	1	1		1	1	1		1	6
Communication – Presenting	1	1	1	1	1		1		6
Civics and Citizenship – Civic knowledge and understanding	1	1		1	1		1	1	6
Civics and Citizenship – Community engagement	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	6
Humanities – Geography – Geographical knowledge and									
understanding	1	1	1		1			1	5
Science – Science at work	1	1		1	1	1			5
Interpersonal Development – Working in Teams	1		1	1	1		1		5
The Arts – Creating and Making	1		1	1	1		1		5
Science – Science knowledge and understanding			1			1	1		3
Humanities – Economics - Economic reasoning and interpretation	1			1					2
Health and Physical Education - Health knowledge and promotion	1					1			2
Mathematics - Number					1				1
Humanities - History - Historical reasoning and interpretation	1								1
Design, Creativity and Technology - Investigating and designing					1				1
Total VELS Domains and Dimensions in Modules	15	10	10	12	14	8	8	8	

Table 9 provides summarises the number of curriculum areas within each Module.

Table 9 Summary of Total VELS Domains and Dimensions in each Module

Total VELS Domains and Dimensions in each Modules								
	Our Environment	Climate Change	Water	Wildlife and Forests	Energy in Victoria	Food	Pollution	Arctic and Antarctica
Primary	Primary School							
Level 2	8	7	12	10	13	10	12	9
Level 3	11	11	13	13	15	12	9	6
Level 4	8	10	8	11	16	15	10	9
Secondary School								
Level 5	11	10	10	15	16	11	10	8
Level 6	15	10	10	12	14	8	8	8

Table 9 shows that the 'Energy in Victoria' Module is the most comprehensive because it covers the widest range of curriculum areas for the VELS at Level 2 to 5, while at Level 6 the 'Our Environment' Module links to the most curriculum areas.

These findings indicate that the Our Cool School program provides teachers with the opportunity to address environmental issues while covering the set curriculum. This is important because prior research shows that if teachers can see a demonstrated link to the curriculum in a program then they are more likely to use it in their classroom.

However, Table 8 does show a consistently weak link between the teaching of mathematics and the environment across all VELS levels and to a lesser extent to science particularly at VELS level 6. At Years 5 and 6 (VELS level 4) Mathematics (Number) is linked to the teaching of the environment in four Modules while Mathematics – Measurement, Chance and Data and Space – are linked to one Module each. Science knowledge and understanding and Science at work are linked to 4 and 2 Modules respectively.

On this evidence, consideration could be given to increasing the mathematics content at VELS level 4 and 6, and science content in the Modules particularly at VELS level 6 (Years 9 and 10).

#### **Appendix A: Data collection tools**

This appendix provides the data collection instruments:

The Our Cool School – Flagship School Program - Teacher Survey.

The Our Cool School – Flagship School Program – Principal Survey.

# Our Cool School – Flagship School Program (OCS) Program

# **Teacher Survey**

Survey conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research



for the Cool Australia Trust

### About this survey

Who?	This survey is intended for school staff who have been participating in Our Cool School program.				
Why?	As part of the evaluation of the Our Cool School program we are interested in your reflections on various aspects of the program and how you feel about the program as a whole.				
	This survey forms part of the data collection process for the evaluation of the Our Cool School program. The information from this survey will be analysed for Cool Australia and Our Cool School by ACER. No member of school staff or their school will be identified in any reporting.				
How?	The survey will take about 20-30 minutes to complete.				
	Do not spend too much time on any one question.				
When	Please complete and return the survey within the next ten (10) days.				
Where?	Please post the survey back to us using the Reply Paid envelope. If you have lost the envelope, please send it to us using the following address:  Catherine Underwood OCS - Program Evaluation ACER Reply Paid 63589 Private Bag 55 Camberwell Vic 3124				
	If you use this address, you do not need to use a stamp. We will pay for the postage.				
About ACER	ACER is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation that does educational research. You can find out more about ACER at <a href="https://www.acer.edu.au">www.acer.edu.au</a> . If you have any questions, please call Catherine Underwood on 03 9277 5658.				

Dack	ground information
Q 1	What is the type of school you teach at?  Primary Secondary Other, Please tell us
Q 2	What year levels do you teach that are involved in the Our Cool School program?  Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4 Year 5 Year 6 Year 7 Year 10 Cother
Q 3	How many years have you been teaching? (please do not count years on leave, e.g., parental or long service leave)  years
Q 4	How many hours a week do you teach environmental/sustainability education?  hours
Abou	t the Our Cool School program in your classroom and school
Q 5	To what extent do the aims of the Our Cool School program address your needs?  Not at all  To a minor extent  To a moderate extent  To a major extent
Q6	Describe the main aims of the Our Cool School program as they apply to you in teaching about the environment?
Q7	Describe how your involvement in the Our Cool School program has made a difference to the way you teach about the environment?

0.0	understand								
	Please tick one box on each row.	Not at all	To a minor extent	To a moderate extent	To a major extent				
	<ul> <li>a. how to teach an environmental project/ unit or subject.</li> </ul>								
	b. teaching and learning approaches suited to environmental issues.								
	c. how my school can become environmentally sustainable.								
	d. how to document students' learning in environmental topics.								
	e. how to assess students' environmental and sustainability learning achievement.								
	f. how to monitor progress towards becoming an environmentally sustainable school.								
Q 9	How would you rate the quality of your teaching of the environment <u>before</u> participatir in the Our Cool School program? <i>Please circle.</i> Low  High								
	1 2 3 4	5	6	7	8				
Q 10	How would you rate the quality of your teaching the Our Cool School program? <i>Please circle</i>	le.							
	Low 1 2 3 4	5	6	7	<b>High</b> 8				
Use o	f the Our Cool School website								
Q 11	Q 11 Did you have access to the Our Cool School website?								
	Yes No If No, please	e go to Q1	8						
Q 12	How often do you use the Our Cool School website in the last 12 months?  More than once a week								
	About once a week								
	About once every couple of weeks								
	About once a month								
	About once a Term								
	Very rarely								

Q 13	How useful have you found the Our Cool School we	ebsite?				
	Not at all useful					
	Somewhat useful					
	Useful					
	Very useful					
Q 14	How good is the Our Cool School website					
	Please tick one box on each row.	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very good	
	a. in the range of environmental topics covered.					
	b. in the presentation of topics.					
	c. for the comprehensiveness of topics.					
	d. for readability.					
	e. ease of use.					
	f. as a stimulus for discussion among staff.					
	g. in providing theoretical information about a topic.					
	h. for user friendliness.					
	i. in providing up-to-date information.					
	j. in covering local environmental issues.					
	k. for students to access information.					
Q 15	What kind of information do you look for on the Out (Tick all that apply)	r Cool So	chool wel	osite?		
	a. Module lesson plans.					
	b. Student activity sheets.					
	c. The latest environmental news for you and your stud					
	d. Information about events you and your students can get involved in.					
	e. Information about Environmental Grants and Rebate offered by the government to help you green your so		е		]	
	f. Fact Sheets.					
	g. Videos.					
	h. Reference books as an educational resource.				]	

Q 16	What would m							
Q 17	Will you contiteaching about Yes No					esources to	assist y	ou in
Q 17a	Please tell us	why?						
Profess	Professional judgement of student engagement with the Our Cool School program							
Q 18	How would you rate your students knowledge of environmental issues before participating in the Our Cool School program? Please circle.  Low High  1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8							
Q 19	How would you participating i Low						ies <u>after</u> 7	<b>High</b> 8

## Q 20 Students in my class ....

Please	tick one box on each re	DW.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
a. enjo she	y using the Our Cool Seets.	chool activity						
b. find	the activity sheets fun.							
envi	forward to learning aboronment as presented to School program.							
d. acce	ess the Our Cool Schoo	I website.						
	the Our Cool School we gate.	ebsite easy to						
f. feel	overwhelmed by enviro	nmental issues						
g. are	g. are afraid of the future.							
	eager to learn what the environment.	y can do to help						
	keen to learn new ideas se a sustainable future							
•	more aware of environn Ilt of the Cool Schools p							
	erstand the impact peopenvironment.	ole can have on						
The Our Cool School program Modules								
Not at a Somew Useful	Not at all useful  Somewhat useful							

Q 22	How good are the teaching Modules and learning a	ctivities			
	Please tick one box on each row.	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very good
	a. for engaging students.				
	b. in the variety of topics.				
	c. in the presentation of topics				
	d. for the comprehensiveness of topics.				
	e. in the age appropriateness of the Modules.				
	f. in the age appropriateness of the activity sheets.				
	g. in linking environmental learning activities to the VELS curriculum standards.				
	h. in capturing the VELS Level you are teaching too.				
	i. in providing informative learning activities.				
	j. for increasing your confidence in teaching about the environment.				
Thinki Q 23	ing about the Our Cool School Modules you have us Which Our Cool School Module topic have you fel			ost engag	<u>ed</u> with?
Q 24	Why do you feel the students engaged most with	the Modul	e topic?		
Q 25	What have been the one (1) most popular Our Coostudents have enjoyed?	ol School	Module le	esson <u>act</u>	<u>ivity</u> your

Q 26	Why do you feel students most enjoyed this activity sheets?							
	Student Outcome What do students experience and achieve through		Cool Sch	nool progra	m			
	μ	9						
Q 27	To what extent has the Our Cool School program	increased			Т			
	Please tick one box on each row.	Not at all	To a minor extent	To a moderate extent	To a major extent			
	a. awareness of the environment and related issues							
	<ul> <li>knowledge and understanding of the environment.</li> </ul>							
	c. understanding of the impact people have on the environment.							
	d. social skills.							
	e. skills involved in identifying and thinking about ways to solve environmental issues.							
	f. sense of responsibility to address environmental issues.							
	g. concern for the environment.							
Q 28	To what extent has the Our Cool School program		r student	s the skills				
	Please tick one box on each row.	Strongly disagree	Disagre	e Agree	Strongly agree			
	a. apply critical thinking skills when thinking about the environment.							
	b. understand the impact people can have on the environment.							
	c. change their lifestyle or practices outside of school (e.g. at home).							
	d. encourage their family to adopt environmentally friendly habits.							

	To what extent do students in the Our Cool Schoo Please tick one box on each row.	I program  Never Sometimes Often Always
		Thever sometimes often raways
	<ul><li>a. work well in groups.</li><li>b. listen to what other students have to say.</li></ul>	
	c. confidently contribute ideas in a group.	
	d. think all people in a group should help doing a job.	
	u. Thirth all people in a group should help doing a job.	
Q 30	What changes have your students made outside out of class)?	the school setting (e.g. in their family,
Q 31	Please provide <u>one</u> example of an instance who had an impact on your students behaviour at sch	
The O	ur Cool School program	
Q 32	How would you rate the quality of the link between modules and the VELS Standards?  Very poor  Poor  Good  Very good	en the Our Cool School teaching
Q 33	To what extent do you agree with the statement:  "The Our Cool School program aims to make teal environment as easy as possible"  Not at all  To a minor extent  To a moderate extent  To a major extent	nching and learning about the

Q 34	What one change would most improve the Our Cool School program?
Q 35	Has anything about the Our Cool School program surprised you?
	Yes No If No, please go to Q36
Q 35a	If yes, what has surprised you?
Q 36	Please make any other comments about the Our Cool School program?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY

## Our Cool School – Flagship School Program (OCS) Program

## **Principal Survey**

Survey conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research



for the Cool Australia Trust

## About this survey

Who?	This survey is intended for Principals or a designated member of staff who have the Our Cool School – Flagship School program in their school.
Why?	As part of the evaluation of the Our Cool School program we are interested in your reflections on various aspects of the program and how you feel about the program as a whole.
	This survey forms part of the data collection process for the evaluation of the Our Cool School program. The information from this survey will be analysed for Cool Australia and Our Cool School by ACER. No schools or respondents will be identified in any reporting.
How?	The survey will take about 20-30 minutes to complete.
	Do not spend too much time on any one question.
When	Please complete and return the survey within the next ten (10) days.
Where?	Please post the survey back to us using the Reply Paid envelope. If you have lost the envelope, please send it to us using the following address:  Catherine Underwood OCS - Program Evaluation ACER Reply Paid 63589 Private Bag 55 Camberwell Vic 3124
	If you use this address, you do not need to use a stamp. We will pay for the postage.
About ACER	ACER is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation that does educational research. You can find out more about ACER at <a href="https://www.acer.edu.au">www.acer.edu.au</a> . If you have any questions, please call Catherine Underwood on 03 9277 5658.

Abou	t Your School
Q 1	What is the type of school you are the Principal at?  Primary Secondary Other, Please tell us.
Q 2	How many students are enrolled at your school?
Q 3	Of these students, about how many  a) are Indigenous  b) speak English as a second language
Q 4	How many equivalent full-time teachers are at your school?
Abou	t the Our Cool School program in your school and curriculum
Q 5	How did your school hear about the Our Cool School program?
Q 6	What is the main reason your school became involved in the Our Cool School program?
Q 7	Is your school currently involved in any other Environmental and or sustainability programs?  Yes No
8 D	Does your school have an Environmental and or Sustainability policy?  Yes No If No, please go to Q11
Q 9	What are the main aims the policy intends to address?

Q 10	To what extent has participation in the Our Cool School program influenced the content of your school Environmental and or Sustainability policy?						
	1	Not at all					
	-	To a minor extent					
	-	To a moderate extent					
	-	To a major extent					
Q 11	To	what extent has the Our Cool School progra	am				
	Pi	lease tick one box on each row.	Strongly	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
		increased environmental and sustainability	ulsagicc	Disagree	/ rgree		
	u.	content in the curriculum.					
	b.	strengthened school leadership support for focusing on environmental issues.					
	C.	provided more environmental learning opportunities and programs for students.					
	d.	encouraged the design of subject units or projects around the unique needs or location of your school.					
	e.	got more staff interested and involved in the environment and sustainability.					
	f.	improved the school's sustainability practices (e.g. recycling).					
	g.	improved the school's natural environment (e.g. planting trees in school grounds).					
	h.	changed student involvement in the environment (e.g. establishing clubs).					
	i.	helped your school develop relationships with environmental organisations.					
	j.	encouraged your school to collaborate with other schools on local environmental issues.					
	k.	encouraged teachers to assess what students learn about the environment.					

Q IZ	? To what extent has the Cool Schools program								
	Please tick one box on each row.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree				
	a. raised students' awareness of the environment.								
	b. increased students' environmental knowledge.								
	c. developed students' environmental attitudes.								
	d. developed students' environmental skills.								
	e. got students to consider the impact of their behaviour on the environment.								
	f. motivated students to take action to care for the environment.								
Q 13	O 13 At your school has involvement in the Cool Schools program helped develop an awareness of the environment in any of the following ways? Please tick applicable boxes.  a. Establishment of environmental clubs.  b. Establishment of student environment interest groups.  c. Student initiated projects (e.g. planting trees, recycling)  d. Student involvement in community activities (e.g. Clean up Australia Day)  e. Inviting guest speakers to talk to students  f. Writing of a school Environmental Sustainability Policy								
Q 14	<ul> <li>Which VELS areas has your school actively incorpenvironment? Please tick applicable boxes.</li> <li>a. The Arts</li> <li>b. English</li> <li>c. The Humanities - Economics</li> <li>d. The Humanities - Geography</li> <li>e. Health and Physical Education</li> <li>f. Mathematics</li> <li>g. Science</li> <li>h. Interpersonal Development</li> <li>i. Personal Learning</li> <li>j. Civics and Citizenship</li> <li>k. Communication</li> <li>l. Design, Creativity and Technology</li> <li>m. Thinking processes</li> </ul>			ut the					
	<ul><li>m. Thinking processes</li><li>n. Information and Communications Technology (ICT</li></ul>	<u>Γ</u>	] ] <i>Please Tur</i>	n Over					

Q 15	Please provi							enced you
Q 16	How would y participating Low						ss <u>befor</u>	e High 8
Q 17	How would y participating Low						ss <u>since</u> 7	<b>High</b> 8
The O	ur Cool Schoo	I program .						
Q 18	What one ch	ange would	most impro	ove the Ou	ır Cool Sch	ool program	1?	
Q 19	Has anything	g about the	Our Cool So	chool prog	ıram surpri	sed you? If	yes, plea	ese tell us
Q 20	Please make	any other o	comments a	bout the C	Our Cool Sc	chool progra	m?	

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY

Program Outcomes at our school