

Sustainability in Tourism?

Continuing the 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development in this environmental education series by Jeanie Clark

‘Sustainable tourism’ is a focus for this International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (IY2017 STD). What does the concept ‘sustainability’ mean to you and your children? How could ‘Sustainability’ education be applied to tourism? Does it go beyond using public transport (when available), finding recycling bins, staying on made pathways and aiming to leave ‘no trace’ in a natural place? This article will focus on what ‘sustainability’ might mean in tourism at local and regional scales.

Sustainability- the cross curriculum priority

The aims of IY2017 STD were listed in this series’ first article*, along with definitions of ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable tourism’. The Australian and Victorian Curriculums have a detailed and broad concept of sustainability education. It is a ‘cross-curricular’ priority, not to be taught as a separate subject, but to be integrated into all subjects, so that it becomes a way of thinking and acting. Sustainability Education’s ‘organising ideas’ (OI’s) are presented in the table to the right. It encompasses understanding and protecting ecosystems and human systems, and developing attitudes and actions for environmental and social issues of justice, current and future. This could be as a part of education involving tourism.

In OI.5, world views are formed at every level. So regardless of age, tourism experiences can contribute. OI.6 and the definition of Sustainable Tourism, remind us that an environment is not just the ecosystem, but also has economic and social aspects to consider. OI.7 encourages thinking about our values and could easily be applied to behaviours in tourist experiences, regardless of the duration or distance.

Tourism with children may often be short-term and local, and called an ‘excursion’. Sometimes it may be longer and further and called a ‘holiday’. As long as the destination is a place not normally visited and there are new experiences, be they natural, cultural or social, then it can be regarded as tourism. How could it be done sustainably- as sustainable tourism? Try planning for these:

- 1 the impact of travel
- 2 and the food consumed
- 3 how the destination can ‘benefit’ from tourism
- 4 how tourists can minimize their ‘trace’
- 5 broadening and deepening world views with new cultural or environmental insights
- 6 and discovering how sustainability is applied to issues in the environments visited

You may like to consider how these ideas can be applied to the ‘holiday trips’ list of the first article*.

AC Organising ideas for Sustainability Education

Code	Organising Idea
Systems	
OI.1	The biosphere is a dynamic system providing conditions that sustain life on Earth.
OI.2	All life forms, including human life, are connected through ecosystems on which they depend for their wellbeing and survival.
OI.3	Sustainable patterns of living rely on the interdependence of healthy social, economic and ecological systems.
World views	
OI.4	World views that recognise the dependence of living things on healthy ecosystems, and value diversity and social justice, are essential for achieving sustainability.
OI.5	World views are formed by experiences at personal, local, national and global levels, and are linked to individual and community actions for sustainability.
Futures	
OI.6	The sustainability of ecological, social and economic systems is achieved through informed individual and community action that values local and global equity and fairness across generations into the future.
OI.7	Actions for a more sustainable future reflect values of care, respect and responsibility, and require us to explore and understand environments.
OI.8	Designing action for sustainability requires an evaluation of past practices, the assessment of scientific and technological developments, and balanced judgements based on projected future economic, social and environmental impacts.
OI.9	Sustainable futures result from actions designed to preserve and/or restore the quality and uniqueness of environments.
Source: ACARA ‘the Australian Curriculum’ website. < https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/cross-curriculum-priorities/sustainability/ > , latest update 2016 In the Victorian F-10 Curriculum website, ‘Learning about Sustainability’ has more detail than this. Download it from < http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/cross-curriculum-priorities >	

Short trips, local tourism.

Our state is culturally and environmentally diverse. We may not have to go far to find something that can expand our children’s horizons in depth or breadth in nature or culture.

Example 1 – **Food excursion to the Queen Vic Market (QVM) in Melbourne.** 1 travel- Is the least impact by public transport, bikes, foot, or off-peak car travel? 2 Food- needed? Take or buy? 3 Benefit – this has an economic function, so this may mean buying some foodstuffs to eat there or take home to cook. 4 no trace- find the bins! 5 deeper/ broader insights – discover the culture of the vendors and shoppers; compare this food delivery system to that of your usual source. 6 QVM provides on-line materials and school tours which includes addressing its sustainability (see <<http://www.qvm.com.au/schools-kids/>>).

I am writing this article during NAIDOC week - Have you introduced your children to indigenous culture? The Melbourne Museum can help you! Example 2

Indigenous excursion to Bunjilaka Melbourne Museum. 1, 2 and 4 are same as in example 1. 3 benefit- your entry helps finance the Museum, so is there a way to benefit the Indigenous people from whom the knowledge came? 5 deeper/ broader insights of an aboriginal perspective of life can come from their range of cultural displays: animal creations, marking identity, working country, celebrating culture, keeping places, toy stories, and special exhibitions (eg. eel nets in photo) listed at <

<https://museumvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka/>>) For an ecosystems view, there is a self-guided tour of the **Millarri Garden**. On-line, from the webpage above, the bush plants in their different storeys are listed with common and indigenous names- and uses. 6 Reflecting on these uses of this ecosystem and the cultural aspects will reveal sustainability from a traditional indigenous perspective.

Regional Tourism

Tourism into regional Victoria and Australia can bring a different 'world view' to urban dwellers.

1 Travel is mostly based on the car. Public transport is limited. Plan your travel to be efficient, interesting and informative. 2 food- take or buy, depending on your budget. If taking food, eat in local parks- and appreciate their facilities. If buying, there are local businesses to support. 3 This of course benefits the destination, as will paid accommodation and taking time to visit local attractions. 4 No trace? Find the bins for rubbish or take it home. Think of environmental damage that can come from going off- track by vehicle or foot, before you do so. 5 Prepare to find out about the history of places and people, and look for ways to provide contact for your children with locals and their environments. 6 seek out what may be being done to improve sustainability.

Example 3 the **Yarriambiack Silo Art Trail, Wimmera- Mallee, NW Vic** 1 Travel by car from Rupanyup in the south to Patchewollock in the north takes about 3 hours. (See map at <https://www.facebook.com/siloarttrail/?hc_ref=NEW_SFEED>) There is no public transport. To make the most of it, stop at other attractions along the way, e.g. Minyip – alias Coopers Crossing of the TV Show the Flying Doctors. 2 There are local eating places all along the way (supermarkets, milkbars, bakeries, cafes and/or hotels) except for Sheep Hills. 3 Visiting such places, and other natural and cultural attractions, and taking accommodation in caravan parks, motels or hotels benefits the town businesses. What else could be discovered in this rural grain producing region following a creek? 5 Silo art is about people: artists and their subjects. What are their stories? Research them and the silos. The silos weren't built for art! Find



out why they are being used for this now, what they were built for, when and what changed that led to this new use. Research the locations they are in. These places – their subtitles, dates of origin, indigenous history, squatter history, selector history,

purposes of development, boom times, change in function, decline, specialities, and why the silo art trail is important economically to its shire. Each such extension of knowledge on top of simply looking at the art can develop new understandings of rural Victoria and so be 'breaking boundaries' for children that may help them as adults deal with rural-urban issues. 6 Sustainability for these silos? The art recycles them from the white elephants they had become. What about the sustainability of the food produce of the region and issues of towns in decline?

Example 4: **Mount Arapiles- Tooon State Park, Wimmera, NW Victoria.** 1 This is an international destination for rock climbers so it is possible, but not that easy, to get to the nearest town (Natimuk) by public transport. Otherwise, refer to example 3. 2 As an international destination, Natimuk has some finer dining places at it, but there are no food outlets at Arapiles! 3 Similar to example 3, with the city of Horsham nearby. 4 There is a good road to the top with great views and foot tracks back down through the bush- use them. 5 Read the indigenous perspective of **Tjurite** – a sacred site to five Wergaia clans at <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/618566/Arapiles-50-brochure.pdf>. Explore the geologic history, so that when on the summit, imagine it as an island in the sea in the time of the dinosaurs. What plants live here in this rocky environment? Look for their roots infiltrating the rocks and helping create



soil over long times. Visit in spring when the wild flowers are at their best. Today bushwalkers, rock climbers and mountain bikers are key tourist visitors. See their uses at

<<http://www.arapilesbiketrial.com.au/history.html>> The experience of an environment can be very different when rock climbing or mountain biking. 6 If your children try the adventure sports here, find out how these sports address sustainability in their activities. How can indigenous history and sacred sites be respected? Sustainability includes managing campfire use and feral dogs and cats. Pets and summer fires are banned. Winter firewood must be brought in, not gathered locally.

Such activities help develop 'sustainable tourism' habits. What sustainability in tourism activities could you add to your next excursion or holiday?

* Clark, J. 'Tourism- more than you imagine?' in *Otherways*, issue 150, pp 24-25, 2017
© Text and photos by Jeanie Clark, enviroed4all@, Warracknabeal 2017