

C Commonwealth policies and programs relevant to ESD

Table C.1 **Selected Commonwealth policies/programs relevant to ESD**

<i>Policy or program</i>	<i>Nature of policy/program</i>	<i>Relevance to ESD</i>
Industry, science and economy		
<i>Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation</i>		
Treatment and management of man-made and naturally occurring radioactive substances	New ways developed to immobilise and dispose of radioactive waste and to minimise environmental contamination.	The precautionary principle and intergenerational equity are adopted in best practice management.
Application of nuclear science and technology to the understanding of natural processes	Applies nuclear based techniques to research projects such as investigations of global climate change and environmental pathway analysis.	Furtheres the understanding of natural processes.
Competitiveness and ecological sustainability of industry	Projects include minimising environmental impacts of mine wastes and removing contaminants from water.	Develops technology and methodologies for managing mine wastes to minimise their environmental impacts.
<i>CSIRO</i>		
Climate and atmosphere	Climate impact assessments eg. for spread of Queensland fruit fly.	Enhances knowledge of the impact of climate change on the economy.
Land and water	Investigates advantages of 'precision farming'	Uses satellites and associated techniques to improve paddock management to increase profits and reduce adverse environmental impacts such as over fertilisation.
Marine	Investigates how oceans absorb and cycle carbon dioxide	A CSIRO bio-geochemical model is being used to understand how oceans react to terrestrial sources of carbon dioxide which will aid future greenhouse gas emissions modelling.

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Table C.2 Selected Commonwealth policies/programs relevant to ESD

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<i>Policy or program</i>	<i>Nature of policy/program</i>	<i>Relevance to ESD</i>
Field crops	Developing seeds without sex to develop plants that bypass the normal pollination process which is very sensitive to weather processes.	Could dramatically increase crop size and production.
Forestry, wood and paper industries	Developing timber substitutes from waste to produce industrial-scale structural substitutes.	May offer a viable alternative to timber and relieve some demand on scarce timber resources.
Meat, dairy and aquaculture	Biological control of worm parasites which have an adverse effect on sheep.	Biological control will help farmers keep animals healthy with less chemicals.
Built environment	Development of indoor air quality guidelines for the Sydney Olympics.	Improves environmental health.
Chemicals and plastics	Can enable crop plants to produce raw materials needed to make industrial chemicals and polymers.	Could operate as an alternative to petrochemicals or oils.
Integrated manufactured products	Has helped develop the world's most sensitive remote sensing equipment.	Remote sensing is of major importance for improving natural resource management.
Petroleum	Tracing pollution in coastal ecosystems using advanced biomarker techniques.	Improves information and monitoring of emissions.
Pharmaceuticals and human health	Insect bioprospecting to seek out biologically active compounds that benefit human health or crop and animal production.	Potentially benefits human health and the economy.
<i>Department of Communications and the Arts (also includes the Australian Communications Authority)</i>		
<i>Administration of the Telecommunications Act 1997</i>	Regulation of telecommunications in accordance with the Act.	Regulatory frameworks can determine the impact market participants have on the environment.
<i>Administration of the Radiocommunications Act 1992</i>	Regulation of radio frequency spectrum in accordance with the Act.	Regulatory frameworks can significantly determine the impact market participants have on the environment

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Table C.3 Selected Commonwealth policies/programs relevant to ESD
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<i>Policy or program</i>	<i>Nature of policy/program</i>	<i>Relevance to ESD</i>
<i>Department of Industry, Science and Resources</i>		
Regional Tourism Program	Aims to facilitate development of the tourism industry in regional Australia.	Will do so in a way that contributes to managing the resource base for future generations and adds to the protection of biological diversity in high-use natural tourism sites.
Gene technology	Oversees development and use of innovative genetic manipulation techniques without comprising biosafety risk factors.	Risks are associated with concerns related to public health, occupational health and safety, agricultural production or the quality of the environment.
Cooperative Research Centre Program	Includes research, education and training that is designed to establish internationally competitive industry sectors which are ESD consistent.	Balances economic, social and environmental values of development paying attention to issues such as the long term nature of some impacts.
Australian Surveying and Land Information Group	Commonwealth's primary source of topographic, remote sensing and geodetic products and services.	Reliable land and geographic information is important for promoting economic and social development while conserving the environment.
<i>Department of Transport and Regional Services</i>		
Australian Transport and Sustainable Development	Currently developing this policy to promote integrated transport solutions for goods, services and people.	Responsibility for transport lies with different levels of government. An integrated policy will promote ESD consistent outcomes by considering economic, access, environmental, equity and health and safety issues.
National Office of Local Government	Funds local government through the Local Government Development Program.	Assessment of project submissions includes how they address environmental issues and ESD management.
Airports environment	Responsible for approving development activities at Commonwealth airports.	Large developments require a Major Development Plan. This is required if there is a significant environmental or ecological impact.
Aviation environment	Various legislation establishes rules for aircraft emission levels.	Sets down standards for emissions (which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and noise).
Federal Office of Road Safety — Australian Design Rules	Principal mechanism for minimising harmful social and environmental impacts of vehicles.	New vehicle emission standards can improve urban air quality.

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Table C.4 Selected Commonwealth policies/programs relevant to ESD

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<i>Policy or program</i>	<i>Nature of policy/program</i>	<i>Relevance to ESD</i>
Maritime transport	Policy matters relating to shipping.	Main function is to combat pollution and other environmental damage from ships.
Roads funding	Commonwealth provides grants to States for specific road projects.	Roads can dramatically alter land use. Better roads can lower fuel consumption and therefore reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
National Capital Authority	Responsible for developing and planning for Canberra's future.	Programs designed to promote sustainable planning frameworks, and conserve the character and value of national lands for current and future generations.
<i>Department of the Treasury</i>		
Fiscal policy	Derivation of federal budgets.	A balanced, or even surplus, budget is consistent with intergenerational equity and sustainable development.
Tax policy	Design of the tax system for funding of government activities, and use of specific tax measures.	Can be used to enhance equity within the community. Specific measures can be used to internalise previously unaccounted for costs.
Foreign investment policy — domestic	Treasurer has the power to reject foreign investment which is contrary to the national interest.	Any adverse environmental concerns will be subject to an environmental impact assessment.
Foreign investment policy — international	Treasury represents Australian foreign investment interests in the OECD.	Multilateral investment negotiations may involve recognition of conservation and sustainable development values.
<i>National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals</i>		
Product registration	Before an agricultural or veterinary chemical product can be sold, it must be assessed and registered by the Authority.	Companies must prove that the product will be safe for humans and non-target species and that it will not pose unacceptable risks to the environment or to trade with other nations.
Quality assurance and compliance	Funds inspection and surveillance activities to ensure consistent compliance with conditions of registration.	Ensures information on chemicals is correct and meets the designated standards.

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Table C.5 Selected Commonwealth policies/programs relevant to ESD
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<i>Policy or program</i>	<i>Nature of policy/program</i>	<i>Relevance to ESD</i>
Social and defence		
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission</i>		
Social and cultural program	Mainly involved in encouraging other agencies to ensure indigenous views are represented.	Allows indigenous views on matters, including the environment, to be expressed to governments and non-government agencies.
<i>AusAID</i>		
Australian aid program	Includes projects such as: sea level and climate monitoring (South Pacific), Hyderabad Waste Management (India), East Timor Water Supply and Sanitation (Indonesia), and sustainable forest utilisation (Vanuatu).	All projects aim to integrate economic, social and environmental goals to create a sustainable outcome.
<i>Department of Defence</i>		
Environment policy statement	Outlines an environmental vision and a series of environmental goals for the Department.	ESD principles were integral to development of this policy.
Defence Instruction (General) Administration 40-1 Environment and Heritage	Formal instrument for the issue of environmental policy directives and guidelines.	Provides guidance and procedures for environmental impact assessments and clearance processes for Defence activities and proposals.
Defence service charter	Covers the aspects of Defence that directly interact with the community .	Attempts to make ESD principles transparent and more visible to stakeholders.
Defence Environmental Management System	Framework for integrated environmental management in Defence.	Outcomes should include the integration of environmental objectives with Defence operational goals.
Maritime environmental management - clean ships	Developed sound environmental practices for Navy operations.	Preserves the marine environment by controlling discharge of waste and pollution at sea.

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Table C.6 Selected Commonwealth policies/programs relevant to ESD

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<i>Policy or program</i>	<i>Nature of policy/program</i>	<i>Relevance to ESD</i>
Environmental management in major defence exercises — Tandem Thrust	A joint US and Australian land and sea military exercise.	An environmental impact assessment was undertaken and the Environment Monitoring Group was established to monitor and review the impact of this exercise.
Defence environmental panel	A panel of environmental consultants who provide specific environmental expertise to Defence.	The panel has been used as an effective input into many projects to produce an ESD consistent outcome.

Resource management and environment related

Australian Greenhouse Office

National Greenhouse Strategy	A strategic framework for Australia's greenhouse response.	Allows all spheres of government, industry and the broader community to participate.
Greenhouse Challenge	A cooperative effort between industry and government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	Reducing emissions will help Australia achieve its Kyoto target once ratified.
Sustainable Energy — Energy markets	Three projects include: 2% mandatory targets for renewable energy sources; efficiency standards for power generation; and efficiency standards for energy production and distribution.	Aim is to integrate environmental and economic issues so as to reduce the greenhouse gas intensity of energy production and supply.
Cities for Climate Protection	Involves the local community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through local government initiatives.	Initiative focuses on local government operations, households, waste disposal, land use change and transport.
Emissions trading	Researching the prospect of introducing an emissions trading system to help meet Australia's greenhouse gas emissions Kyoto commitments.	A trading system is one of a range of mechanisms proposed for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Regional forest agreements (also involves Environment Australia)	Develop Commonwealth-State agreements in relation to designated forest regions.	Recognise the environmental heritage, social and economic issues associated with long term management of forests.
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Table C.7 Selected Commonwealth policies/programs relevant to ESD

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<i>Policy or program</i>	<i>Nature of policy/program</i>	<i>Relevance to ESD</i>
COAG strategic water industry reform framework	Developing a framework to manage quality and quantity of surface and groundwater resources by 2001.	Intended to generate an economically sustainable water industry which meets community needs and natural resource management objectives.
Fisheries action program	Aims to repair Australia's aquatic environment and assist in sustainable use of all fisheries.	Includes encouraging community participation in activities to improve fisheries ecosystems.
Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management	Development of a framework of regional level criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management based on the internationally agreed Montreal process.	Provides a framework to develop sustainable forestry management indicators at the regional level.
Murray-Darling Basin Initiative ^a	Implements an integrated catchment management strategy that includes promoting the efficient, equitable and sustainable use of land and water resources.	Provides a mechanism to manage the Basin in an ESD consistent manner.
Sugar industry infrastructure program	Enhance the economic performance of the sugar industry by providing funding for infrastructure projects, including increased water availability, to promote investment.	Before being approved projects must satisfy the environmental and planning requirements of the States/Territories and the Commonwealth.
<i>Environment Australia</i>		
National Heritage Trust ^b	Five year legislated commitment to fund natural resource management projects.	Aims to repair and replenish Australia's natural capital.
Management of Commonwealth protected areas (eg. Kakadu)	Management of national parks and wildlife through legislation.	Assists in the conservation of Australia's biodiversity and associated natural and cultural heritage.
World Heritage Program	Provides policy advice to the Minister and helps meet Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention.	Allows nations to act cooperatively to protect natural and cultural heritage.
Regional forest agreements (see discussion above)		

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Table C.8 Selected Commonwealth policies/programs relevant to ESD

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<i>Policy or program</i>	<i>Nature of policy/program</i>	<i>Relevance to ESD</i>
Marine program - Coasts and Clean seas	Provides grants on an annual basis to increase on ground activities.	Program focuses on the conservation, sustainable use and repair of the coastal marine environment.
Environmental impact assessment	When triggered, the process requires all Commonwealth agencies to account for significant environmental impacts.	Accounting for significant environmental impacts will increase the likelihood of ESD outcomes being achieved.
National pollutant inventory	Establishes a database of information on emissions.	Information will help decision making at all levels of government and industry.
<i>Fisheries Research and Development Corporation</i>		
Resource sustainability	Aims to develop wild fish resources in an ESD consistent manner.	Management is approached from a total ecosystem perspective.
Ecosystems protection	Aims to protect ecosystems upon which fisheries and aquaculture depend.	Provides information that allows more competent ecosystem wide decisions to be made.
Industry development	Encourages sustainable resource utilisation by ensuring that wastage is minimised and that quality and value is maximised.	Aims to increase intergenerational equity.
<i>Sugar Research and Development Corporation</i>		
Plant improvement	Funds projects to produce improved varieties of plant.	Objectives include considering the environmental constraints.
Crop management	Funds projects to develop sustainable crop management practices.	Production systems need to be compatible with sound environmental and natural resource management practices.
Crop protection	Funds projects that combat the economic impact of pests and diseases on crops.	Objectives include developing pest management strategies that rely less on chemical products.
Cane harvesting and transport	Funds projects to improve the transport and harvesting of cane.	Objectives include minimising the adverse environmental impacts of harvesting and transport.
Sugar manufacture	Funds projects to reduce unit production costs and develop options for alternative uses of sugar products.	A focus has been on the reduction of the environmental impact of liquid effluent, wastes, noise and airborne particles.

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Table C.9 Selected Commonwealth policies/programs relevant to ESD
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<i>Policy or program</i>	<i>Nature of policy/program</i>	<i>Relevance to ESD</i>
Environment and natural resource management	Funds projects aimed at the long term maintenance of the natural resource base.	Environmentally sound practices are linked to the maintenance of profitability for the grower and miller.
Industry competitiveness	Funds projects which relate to the competitiveness of the sugar industry and its position in the economy.	Includes analysing the adverse impacts of urban encroachment and other competing resource uses on sugar production.

- ^a This program is funded under the Natural Heritage Trust Program outlined under Environment Australia.
- ^b This program is run jointly with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Program approval requires consent from both Ministers.

Sources: resp. 5, 9, 12, 14; 15, 17; 18, 22-25; sub. 14, 28, 38.