

University sector consultation towards Australia's Voluntary National Review on Agenda 2030 and the SDGs

Date: Wednesday, 13 December 2017

Time: 9:30 am for 10:00 am start to 2:00 pm (including a light lunch)

Venue: Monash Conference Centre, Level 7, 30 Collins St, Melbourne VIC 3000

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Rationale

The Australian Government will be presenting its first National Voluntary Review (VNR) on national progress towards the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs to the UN High Level Political Forum in July 2018.

The VNR will report, among other things, on how all sectors in Australia are contributing to the implementation of the SDGs, both domestically and internationally. The Government is currently holding consultations to collect case studies on such actions and initiatives.

The Australian university sector plays a critical role in SDG implementation. Through research, education, organisational practices, and community leadership it already contributes in many different ways to *all* the SDGs. The VNR is an important opportunity to showcase the sector's overall contribution and impact, which is much greater and broader than what can be captured by individual case studies.

Aims and outcomes

The aim of this workshop is to develop a short statement summarising the contribution of the Australian university sector towards the implementation of the SDGs, to supplement and support the Government's formal VNR consultations.

We propose to structure the statement around four main points:

1. The sector makes a significant contribution to SDG implementation through its "business as usual" core activities.
2. There is strong support from across the sector for the SDGs, and many universities are already going "beyond business as usual" by using the SDGs as a framework for increasing their contribution to sustainable development.
3. The sector has considerable scope to scale up its contributions to SDG implementation, including to support other sectors in national implementation of the SDGs.
4. There are actions that could be taken by the sector, by the Government, and by others that would enable the sector to greatly increase its contribution to SDG implementation.

The aim of the discussion at the workshop is to capture key points, illustrative examples and recommendations to flesh out each of these in the context of the Australian university sector.

Agenda

9:30–10:00	Registration / tea & coffee
10:00–10:30	Setting the scene <i>Chair: Dr Tahl Kestin (Network Manager, SDSN Australia/Pacific)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of the session – Dr Tahl Kestin• Overview of the VNR – Sarah Goulding (Assistant Secretary Global Development Branch, DFAT)• Overview of the role of universities in achieving the SDGs – Professor John Thwaites (Chair, SDSN Australia/Pacific)
10:30–11:15	How the sector already contributes to the SDGs <i>Chair: Dr Shirin Malekpour (Researcher & Interdisciplinary Research Coordinator, Monash Sustainable Development Institute)</i> Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do universities contribute to the SDGs as part of their “business as usual” core activities?• How is the sector going explicitly beyond “business as usual” to support SDG implementation?
11:15–11:30	Morning tea
11:30–12:30	How the sector can make a greater contribution going forward <i>Chair: Dr Shirin Malekpour</i> Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the opportunities for the sector to increase its contribution to SDG implementation, particularly to support the Government and other sectors in national implementation?• What can the sector and the Government do to enable the sector to contribute more effectively to SDG implementation?
12:30–12:50	“The last word” <i>Chair: Professor John Thwaites</i> Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What statements about universities and the SDGs would you like to see in the VNR?
12:50–1:00	Wrap up and next steps <i>Chair: Dr Tahl Kestin</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outcomes statement next steps• Additional opportunities<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Additional university case studies for VNR◦ Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee inquiry into the UN SDGs.◦ Australian SDG Summit 2018• Close
1:00–2:00	Lunch