

# Australia

## Sustainability and Environmental Action

*Acquire methods, tools, and different perspectives on how to make our societies more sustainable.*

## Coursework

### Sustainability and Environmental Action Seminar

ENVI 3000 / 8 credits / 120 class hours

An interdisciplinary course with required readings and relevant educational excursions focusing on an analysis of efforts to pursue sustainability in Australia. Lecturers include the leaders of prominent conservation organizations, professionals from a wide range of disciplines who are leaders in introducing the concepts of sustainability in their fields, and Aboriginal elders who share their cultural understanding of what it means to live sustainably. Seminar topics typically include:

#### *The Natural Environment*

Climate, geology, soils, geomorphology, and ecosystems of Australia and selected regions; coastal processes; ecological processes and biodiversity; environmental limits on development; ecological history of Australia and its peoples.

#### *Environmental Philosophy and Ethics*

Environmental paradigms; ethics; history of the environmental movement; social justice and the environment; the nature of social change; sense of place.

#### *Aboriginal Relationships to the Land*

Indigenous ecological knowledge; Aboriginal worldview; traditional and contemporary Aboriginal environmental management; Aboriginal impact on the environment.

#### *Sustainability*

Climate change; arithmetic of population growth and resource use; environmental decision making; sustainable agriculture and permaculture; sustainable building design; sustainable energy; forestry; tourism; waste management; nature conservation and park management.

#### *Social Change and Environmental Action*

Theories of social change and social marketing; history of social change and environmental action; campaigns by vested interests to prevent social change; analysis of past environmental campaigns; designing successful environmental campaigns.

### Educational Excursions

Much of the teaching and learning on this program occurs in the field, and excursions are totally integrated with other elements. The major field excursion is to the beautiful and sparsely populated island-state of Tasmania, where students spend a week studying sustainability issues related to forestry, hydroelectricity, tourism, and protected areas in addition to the history of the conservation movement. On this excursion the group spends an additional four days in Melbourne and Sydney, the two largest cities in Australia, studying examples of urban sustainability.

The other main excursion is a four-day camping trip in Northern New South Wales, where students camp with Aboriginal elders and develop a deeper knowledge of Aboriginal cultures and bush skills.

There are also a number of one-day field excursions around Byron Bay and Lismore, which examine the natural environment, sustainable house design, eco-communities, organic farming, permaculture, and renewable energy technologies. In each location visited, students are introduced to the area's climate, geology, geomorphology, soils, and flora and fauna, as well as its human history and culture, in order to instill a sense of place and provide a basis for understanding the unique management issues of each region.

### Field Study Seminar

ANTH 3500 / 2 credits / 30 class hours

A course in the concepts of learning across cultures and from field experience. Introduction to the Independent Study Project. Material includes cross-cultural adaptation and skills building; project selection and refinement; appropriate methodologies; field study ethics and the World Learning/SIT Human Subjects Review Policy; developing contacts and finding resources; developing skills in observation and interviewing; content analysis; gathering, organizing, and communicating data; maintaining a work journal.



**Credits** 16

**Duration** Fall/Spring 15 weeks

**Program Base** Byron Bay

**Homestay** Lismore or a nearby rural location in northern New South Wales, 2 weeks

**Other Accommodations** Apartments, hostels, lodges, and campsites

**Independent Study Project** 5 weeks

**Prerequisites** None

### Independent Study Project

ISPR 3000 / 6 credits / 180 class hours

Conducted in northern New South Wales or in another approved location appropriate to the project. Students can undertake a traditional research project, produce a creative work ranging from paintings to creative writing, or complete an internship with an appropriate organization. All projects must relate to some aspect of sustainability. **Sample topic areas:** the effect of dolphin feeding on environmental perceptions of tourists; creating a work of art to promote awareness of forest dieback; a piece of creative travel writing focusing on the meaning of "sense of place"; an analysis of sustainability initiatives at Australian airports; an internship with Friends of the Earth helping on the climate change refugee campaign; creating effective urban community gardens; the conservation of native fauna; a feasibility study for the introduction of solar energy at an Australian university; why farmers choose to convert to organic agriculture; the role of art in promoting sustainability; conceptions of wilderness in Tasmania; an analysis of the reporting of solar power initiatives in Australian newspapers.