

Sustainability Learning Guide: 10 ways to engage with Councillors on sustainability

About this guide

This guide has been developed to assist council sustainability practitioners as they work with councillors on the journey towards sustainability. This journey can be defined as a process for providing the awareness, knowledge, skills, and values to help all current and future generations achieve good health, economic security, social equity and stability while restoring and sustaining the earth's life support systems. The information collected in this guide has come from practitioners who have shared their initiatives with LGSA. For more information visit www.lgsa.org.au under "ESD".

10 Ways to engage with Councillors through involving them with:

1. Provide training opportunities
2. Provide information
3. Encourage resource allocation
4. Conduct sustainability programs
5. Undertake sustainability planning
6. Encourage community development opportunities
7. Offer incentive programs
8. Promote events
9. Foster Corporate Social Responsibility – well being
10. Work with external partners

Note: there are 152 local governments in NSW with 152 ways that council officers and elected representatives work together. When working with councillors it is important to be aware of the code of conduct governing the relationships between councillors and council staff. All of the suggestions below can be achieved within this code. If in doubt check with your General Manager or the Department of Local Government Model Code of Conduct (www.dlg.nsw.gov.au).

Action	Activities	Example Council Projects
1. Provide training opportunities	Promote councillor induction programs which include sustainability modules	LGSA Understanding Sustainability course, LGSA Natural Resource Management councillor training, Hunter Councils training, endorse joining LGSA Sustainable Choice to access the training component
2. Provide information	Reports to council, organise catchment tours, send Councillor's your newsletters, include in surveys, promote intranet, provide mentoring opportunities	,Holroyd Living Sustainably newsletter, Ryde community newsletter, Byron Shire Council Sustainability Services Annual Report
3. Encourage resource allocation	Seek support for grant and award applications and environment levies	LGSA Environment Awards, Penrith Council Revolving Energy Fund; Willoughby City Council E-restore environmental levy program
4. Conduct sustainability programs	Promote signing Mayoral agreements, support and pilot sustainability programs with councillors, e.g. home audits, community gardens	ICLEI – International Council for Local Environment Initiatives and LGSA Climate Change Mayoral agreements, Council of Capital Cities Lord Mayors
5. Undertake sustainability planning	Seek support for council sustainability committee (Local Agenda 21), work to develop sustainability principles (e.g. Melbourne Principles)	Willoughby Council's Sustainability Charter, Sustainability Health Check – LGMA
6. Encourage community development	Encourage involvement with community sustainability champions, encourage use of community environment centre, offer Aboriginal cultural awareness	Albury – Communities of Practice teams, Cowra Council Community Action groups
7. Offer incentive programs	Seek support for Staff sustainability awards and to promote sustainability products to the community	Lismore City Council staff awards, Woollahra Council sustainability staff awards
8. Promote events	Offer speaking opportunities – local media, and seek support for community sustainability events – social and environmental e.g. Walk to work day, World Environment Day expos	Movie Nights e.g. Inconvenient Truth, bush walks, movie nights, trivia nights, Hornsby Shire Council clothes swap nights
9. Foster Corporate Social Responsibility	Seek involvement with Council Friendship Groups (many councils have a relationship with East Timor and other Sister City opportunities), and other CSR events e.g. giving blood, tree planting, car pooling, cancer council morning teas	Lake Macquarie – bike team (bike's for council business use), Manly Council's Friendship City relationship with the East Timorese region of Oecusse
10. Work with external partners	Encourage sitting on regional committees e.g. Catchment Management Authority boards, encourage council to work with TAFE environmental NGOs	Catchment Management Authority Board, ACF Green Home – Ryde Council, Warringah/TAFE Green With ENV-E, encourage participation in LGMA Challenge

Learning from councils in your region is a good way to link, learn and share together, we learn from those on the journey.

For other Sustainability resources including stories from councils visit www.lgsa.org.au and look under "ESD". Relevant publications for councillors interested in sustainability include:

- The DLG Councillor Guide 2008 (Appendix 5: Sustainability)
<http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/documents/Information/CouncillorGuide.pdf>
- The Guide to Good Governance and ESD for Local Councillors 2008 (for Hunter Councils)
- LGSA DVD 'Local Government, the Key to Sustainability' 2004 contact LGSA

The LGSA offers an extensive program of councillor training including two sessions each year in Understanding Sustainability for Councillors. To register contact LGSA Learning Solutions on 02 9242 4181.

The Sustainability team is interested to know of other ways to assist sustainability practitioners as they encourage council on the sustainability journey, so please contact us so we can update this guide. For



helping councils towards
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assistance with your council's sustainability learning journey contact the Sustainability team
sustainability@lgsa.org.au or phone 02 9242 4000.

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