

INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

SUSTAINABILITY TOOL SELECTOR A GUIDE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT



CITING THIS REPORT

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DISCLAIMER

This document contains a sample of tools only and is not a comprehensive list of all tools available in the market. No endorsement of these tools is implied and no tool is recommended above any other. Councils need to make their own assessment of which tools to apply to their own situations.

Tools to support sustainability are amended regularly. Therefore the reader should check with tool owners or publishers for the most up to date information on the product.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DECCW	Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water
DLG	Department of Local Government
EFS	Education for Sustainability
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
ISF	Institute for Sustainable Futures
LGSA	Local Government & Shires Association of NSW
LGMA NSW	Local Government Managers Australia NSW
OH & S	Occupational Health and Safety
QBL	Quadruple Bottom Line
SHC	Sustainability Health Check
SSROC	South Sydney Regional Organisations of Councils
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
USSA	Urban Sustainability Support Alliance



Introduction

PROJECT IN BRIEF

The Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) at UTS was commissioned by the Urban Sustainability Support Alliance (USSA) to prepare a resource guide for Local Government.

'*Sustainability Tool Selector: A Guide for Local Government*' (the Guide) showcases ten tools that can help council staff with evaluation, decision making, developing performance indicators and tracking progress towards sustainability at an organisational and project level. The case studies show how the tools have been used in practice in NSW councils, with a focus on resources required and outcomes achieved.

Other tools will be added in the future. These will be located at www.lgsa.org.au/ussa

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This Guide follows earlier work done by ISF on barriers and drivers to sustainability in Local Government. Feedback from councils confirmed that there are plenty of tools available but that practitioners need information that focuses on solutions and gives guidance on which tool to use and when.

HOW THIS GUIDE WILL ASSIST COUNCILS

The guide is intended to save time spent researching tools and help reduce confusion about the differences between the tools. It also identifies councils who have experience with those tools. Through identifying the most suitable tools to use for their purposes, councils will be better placed to integrate sustainability into their council.

DEFINITION OF TOOLS

The definition of a tool being used for this project is as follows: '*a tool is a procedure, guidance, method, evaluation or assessment to accomplish an objective or achieve a result*'. *

INFORMATION PROVIDED ON EACH TOOL

This guide provides the following information on each tool:

- > Description of the tool
- > Intended outcomes through use
- > Use by councils

* Practical Evaluation Tools for Urban Sustainability, European Union www.petus.eu.com



Introduction

- > Strengths
- > Special considerations / limitations
- > Cost and time commitment
- > Support offered
- > Where to find the tool
- > Council case study

CRITERIA FOR INCLUDED TOOLS

A range of tools were identified through consultation with councils. The following criteria were then used to guide the selection of tools included in this Guide:

- > Relevant to a need identified through Local Government feedback
- > Used by at least some NSW councils and/or recommended by councils
- > Supported by an organisation that could help councils to use the tool if required and that maintain and update the tool
- > Up to date and could be used by councils without much adaptation

Most of the tools that meet these criteria were developed by third parties, but councils

themselves have also developed innovative approaches to meet their needs. For example, the *Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol*, was developed in-house by Ryde City Council.

Where tools are part of a funded program, for example the NSW Government's *Sustainability Advantage program*, this Guide gives information on the program as well as the tools.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN USING TOOLS

Different tools perform different functions. Some tools have more of a strategic management function and others have more of an operational function (see next section 'Guide to Selecting Tools' for an explanation of how these terms are used in this Guide). However, even those tools that focus on operations, for example Sustainable Choice, can also encourage a conversation about sustainability and be used strategically.

One of the basic assumptions underpinning this Guide is that tools don't replace thinking, and that councils will need to adapt the tools to their own circumstances and local



conditions. Some tools may only be used in part and timing will also be important for a council to get the most out of any particular tool.

The authors acknowledge that councils are organised differently and conceptualise their role and key functions in various ways, therefore and so not all tools that are described in this Guide will suit all councils.

CATEGORIES AND KEY FUNCTIONS

In this Guide, the tools are grouped into just two categories — Strategic Management Tools and Operational Tools. This is because consultation with councils revealed that different groups use similar words to mean something different, so it is hard to create more detailed categories for the day-to-day work of the council. To make this distinction, authors drew on course material prepared by the UTS Centre for Local Government ** which differentiates between strategic environmental tools and operational environmental tools.

Within those two categories, this guide uses key questions that identify the need that the tool seeks to address.

** UTS Centre for Local Government (2002)
Local Environmental Management:
Achieving Better Outcomes

The tools in this Guide can assist council staff with evaluations, decision making, developing performance indicators and tracking progress towards sustainability at an organisational and project level.

A matrix that assists in the selection of tools according to these functions is provided in the next section, 'Guide to Selecting Tools.'

OTHER RELATED RESOURCES

A range of related tools, resources and toolkits covering other topics were also identified through the consultation process to develop this guide. A brief description of these tools and resources, and where they can be located, is provided in the section titled 'Other Resources'.



Guide to Selecting Tools

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Sustainability, by definition, involves all areas of council's business and people at different levels of responsibility in the organisation. From road crew members to human resource directors, we can all make a difference to the sustainability of our organisation and our community. Sustainability includes environmental, social, economic and governance dimensions. See Appendix One for more detailed definitions of sustainability.

While all the tools included in this Guide address aspects of evaluation, decision making, developing performance indicators and tracking progress towards sustainability, the tools covered in Section A focus on tools that are applied at a corporate level and share the characteristics outlined below.

Some have sustainability specifically in mind, while others can be used as a framework to ensure sustainability is considered

in other systems of management or reporting. No matter which tool is used, each one requires some consideration of the council's needs, its existing systems and what is required for that tool to assist in the integration of sustainability within the organisation.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TOOLS

In this Guide, strategic management tools are those which:

- > are part of a framework of planning, decision-making and reporting
- > address broader issues rather than concentrating on the fine detail
- > assist in meeting external standards and industry benchmarks
- > examine issues that are seen as important for a council as a whole; and
- > are concerned with inter-connected issues.



TOOLS AND COUNCIL CASE STUDIES IN THIS SECTION

No.	Tool	Description	Case Studies
1	Australian Business Excellence Framework	The Australian Business Excellence Framework is an “integrated leadership and management system” which provides a structured way for an organisation to identify areas for improvement.	Warringah Council Port Stephens Council
2	Environmental Management Systems and the ISO 14001 Standard	An Environmental Management System (EMS) is an internationally-recognised framework for managing and minimising an organisation’s impact on the environment. It is a systematic approach to identifying, measuring, managing and controlling environmental impacts.	Marrickville Council Gosford City Council
3	Global Reporting Initiative Framework	The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework is a tool that assists organisations to move beyond financial reporting and to report on the economic, environmental and social dimensions of their activities, products and services.	Hornsby Shire Council Ku-ring-gai Council
4	NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check	The NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check (SHC) is an assessment and management planning tool to measure the extent to which sustainability practices and principles are in place in council and find ways to improve sustainability practices and outcomes.	Wagga Wagga City Council Canterbury Council
5	TechnologyOne Performance Planning	TechnologyOne Performance Planning is a software tool that supports councils to document, monitor, report on and manage their plans and performance against those plans.	Ku-ring-gai Council Albury City Council



Guide to Selecting Tools

OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Even with the best planning and strategy in place, staff training, new software and reporting systems, there can still be a gap in making day-to-day Council operations more sustainable. This Guide includes five operational tools to complement the other tools reviewed. The case study examples share the experiences of councils who have used these tools, at least in part, to assess their progress towards sustainability.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In this Guide the 'operational tools' are those which:

- > address sustainability aspects of day-to-day activities of council
- > 'hang off' rather than fit into the management cycle
- > are the means for achieving strategic goals and targets; or
- > can be initiated by divisions and project teams.



TOOLS AND COUNCIL CASE STUDIES IN THIS SECTION

No.	Tool	Description	Case Studies
1	Outcome Hierarchy Framework	The Outcome Hierarchy Framework is a program planning tool that is promoted by the NSW Government to assist councils in planning and evaluating programs, including Education for Sustainability programs.	Wollongong, Kiama and Shellharbour Councils Blue Mountains City Council
2	Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol	The Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol is an example of a council developing its own decision-making tool based on quadruple bottom line (QBL) principles.	The City of Ryde Wingecarribee Shire Council
3	SSROC Sustainability Guidelines for Decision Makers, Volume 2	The Sustainability Guidelines for Decision Makers are a set of tools originally developed for SSROC Councils for assessing council departmental activities and services using ESD principles and now made generally available through the SSROC website.	Tamworth Regional Council Sutherland Shire Council
4	Sustainability Advantage	Sustainability Advantage is a business support service that includes a range of tools to assist medium to large sized organisations to better understand sustainability and to improve their environmental performance.	Lake Macquarie City Council Greater Taree City Council
5	Sustainable Choice	Sustainable Choice is a free sustainable procurement program for NSW councils. It supports councils in making sustainable purchasing decisions and in integrating sustainable purchasing into existing policies and practices	Kempsey Shire Council Hornsby Shire Council



Guide to Selecting Tools

SELECTING TOOLS ACCORDING TO FUNCTION

TOOLS		Decision making	Developing performance indicators	Tracking progress - organisational level	Tracking progress - program level	Evaluation & review
Strategic tools						
1	Business Excellence Framework					
2	Environmental Management Systems					
3.	Global reporting Initiative Framework					
4	NSW LG Sustainability Health Check					
5	TechnologyOne Performance Planning					
Operational Tools						
1	Outcome Hierarchy Framework					
2	Ryde Sustainability Tool					
3	SSROC Sustainability Guidelines for Decision Makers					
4	Sustainability Advantage					
5	Sustainable Choice					

Note: these are not the only functions performed by the tools included in this Guide, nor the only basis for a council officer selecting the tool for use.



Strategic Management Tools

Tools covered in this section

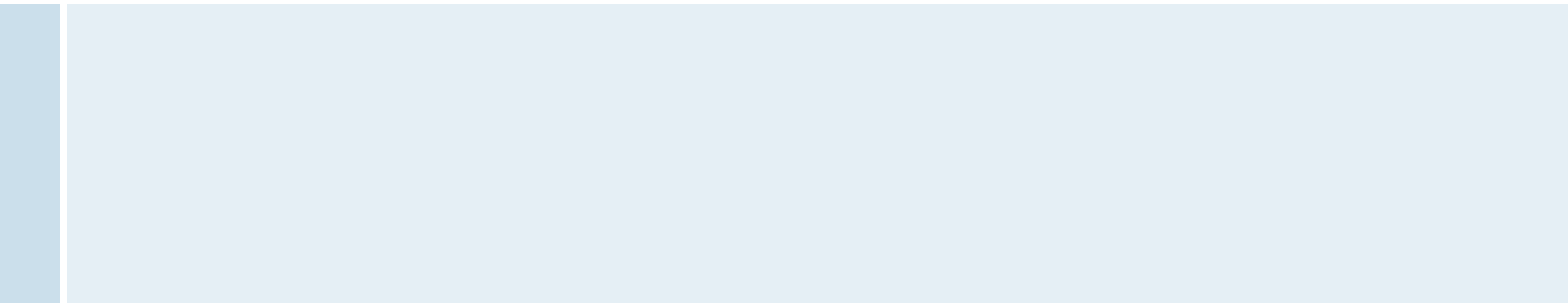
1. Australian Business Excellence Framework
2. Environmental Management Systems and the ISO 14001 Standard
3. Global Reporting Initiative Framework
4. NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check
5. TechnologyOne Performance Planning

NEEDS ADDRESSED THROUGH USING THESE TOOLS

These five tools can help if your council is asking questions like:

- > What tools are being used by management in councils to help build a culture of change, and encourage new ways of thinking, that could help embed sustainability?
- > What IT tools are being used by councils to manage and track information relating to sustainability initiatives and to plan and report against targets in a systematic way?
- > Our council needs to review targets and indicators to help us assess our progress towards sustainability. What frameworks are being used within the Local Government sector?
- > How well is our council going in integrating sustainability? Do our systems support or impede us in meeting our goals?
- > Our sustainability health check has shown that we have some great projects. What tools are available to help us integrate sustainability in a systematic way?





Australian Business Excellence Framework

Summary

The Australian Business Excellence Framework is an 'integrated leadership and management system' which provides a structured way for an organisation to identify areas for improvement. It is intended to be an ongoing process which is integrated into the organisation as a whole. It can be implemented through self-assessment or with the support of the Excellence in Local Government (EiLG) proprietary program offered by the consultancy SAI Global.

INTRODUCTION

The Business Excellence principles were originally developed in the late 1980s to reflect the principles and practices of high performing organisations. The development of the international Business Excellence Framework is overseen by an international steering committee, comprising representatives from business, government and academia, and was most recently revised in 2007. Internationally, there are close to 80 national Business Excellence models and these are managed by the Global Excellence Model Council. SAI Global Limited is the host of the Australian Business Excellence Framework.

TOOL DESCRIPTION

The Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF) as described by SAI Global is an 'integrated leadership and management system that describes the elements essential to sustainable organisational excellence'. It is aimed at supporting continuous improvement and a focus on excellence across

an organisation. It provides a set of business excellence principles covering the areas of Leadership, Strategy and Planning, Data, Information and Knowledge, People, Customer and Market Focus, Innovation, Quality and Improvement and Success & Sustainability.

The ABEF provides a systematic and structured approach for an organisation to assess itself against these business excellence principles and to then improve the performance of its leadership and management systems. By using the framework an organisation can benchmark its own progress against these principles and compare itself to other organisations.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

When using the framework, the organisation first does an assessment in the seven areas covered by the principles (see tool description above). This identifies areas for improvement that will bring the organisation closer to reflecting 'excellence' in each area. Over the longer term, integration of the framework aims to deliver:



Australian Business Excellence Framework

- > a strong organisational focus on service improvement
- > increased responsiveness to community needs
- > learning of continuous improvement tools
- > improved organisational leadership capability; and
- > ability to be an innovative organisation.

USE BY COUNCILS

ABEF is used by many councils across Australia, as well as a number of large companies such as BHP Billiton, ALCOA and Fremantle Ports. The Department of Local Government has suggested the use of ABEF to several councils through their *Promoting Better Practice* reports. ABEF was suggested as a way to develop awareness and ownership of a council's long-term strategy amongst staff and to get staff from different sections to work together.

NSW Councils who currently use the Framework include: Ballina Shire Council, Broken Hill City Council, Byron Bay Shire Council, Eurobodalla Shire Council, Gosford City Council, Holroyd City Council, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Newcastle City Council, Port Stephens Council, Richmond Valley Council, Rockdale City Council,

Tumut Shire Council, Warringah Council and Wagga Wagga City Council.

STRENGTHS

The key strength of ABEF is that it encourages an integrated and strategic approach to improving performance and governance processes. Many councils respond to sustainability issues in a fragmented and reactive manner. ABEF is a useful aid to integrate multiple processes while focusing on the systemic performance of council as a whole. ABEF is focused on systems, which councils have found useful in identifying connections and interdependencies across council and helpful in ensuring different parts of the organisation talking to each other. Users found this creates opportunities to incorporate sustainability concerns into cross-departmental discussions and to talk about how to create the best community outcomes.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/ LIMITATIONS

Councils report that ABEF has to be driven by the senior management and requires the commitment of the whole organisation to be successful. It cannot be applied to just one part. It also requires a commitment over several years. They note that the ABEF approaches social and corporate responsibility from a business perspective, while in the public sector the approach and drivers can be different. A comment made was that users should consider that ABEF does not directly aim to improve sustainability, rather it focuses on 'excellence' for an organisation, and sustainability is just one of the intended outcomes.

COST AND TIME COMMITMENT

The *Australian Business Excellence Framework* can be purchased from the SAI Global website for approximately \$70 and an optional self-assessment workbook is available for \$44. Councils can use the framework on its own or get support from the SAI Global Excellence in Local

Government (EiLG) program in integrating the framework.

In some councils, a full time staff member is responsible for implementing the framework, such as Warringah Council (see case study below). Others add implementing ABEF onto an existing role, and may rely more on external training as a result. It is recommended that a core Business Excellence team be appointed to manage the process internally. Councils will also need to free up executive, management and staff time to participate in the various workshops and training; the extent of which will vary, based on the way a council implements the framework.

The ABEF is a process for continual improvement, so to make the most of the framework councils will need to make a long-term commitment to its use.



SUPPORT OFFERED

Consultants from SAI Global provide the Excellence in Local Government (EiLG) program which is tailored to support Local Government in integrating the framework into their management. The EiLG program comprises structured workshops, information sessions and individual coaching to key staff. The core cost of participating in the Excellence in Local Government program varies between \$30,000 and \$40,000 in the first year, depending on the components selected.

WHERE TO FIND

Councils can purchase the Framework directly from the SAI Global website: <http://infostore.saiglobal.com/store/>. Information about the Excellence in Local Government Program can also be obtained from the SAI Global website: <http://www.saiglobal.com/business-improvement/process/excellence/localgov.htm> or by contacting the Client Relations team on 1300 650 262 or at improve@saiglobal.com



Australian Business Excellence Framework

CASE STUDY: WARRINGAH COUNCIL

Context

Warringah Council is located in Sydney's northern beaches and is home to around 135,000 residents. The bush and beach environment stretches between Manly in the south, Pittwater in the north and inland to Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. It has 14 kilometres of coastline including nine beaches and close to 6,000 hectares of natural bushland and open space.

Warringah Council started using the Australian Business Excellence Framework in 2007. The decision to use ABEF was driven by the General Manager who had previous experience with using the Business Excellence framework at Hutt City Council in New Zealand. Council saw Business Excellence as a recognised, systematic improvement method which would enable council to benchmark its improvement and move beyond the perceived 'tick and flick' model of Quality Assurance Management Systems. After two years of using the framework, Council sees itself as still being 'in the early stages of the journey' and only beginning to realise the expected benefits of the Framework.

Approach

Warringah started the process by creating a Business Excellence Team through Council's organisational realignment in 2007. The process so far has involved a series of trainings and workshops to introduce the framework to staff and involve them in the process. External training was provided to staff who could champion the framework and techniques across the organisation and go on to facilitate further internal trainings.

ABEF identifies leadership as a key driver in pursuing excellence. At Warringah one of the first steps was to re-develop Council's Vision, Mission and Values through workshops with staff to give them ownership of Council's new direction. The values were turned into behaviour statements which have been built into the staff performance reviews. These now account for half of their performance assessments.

The main tools used so far have been developing systems views, undertaking self-assessments down to the Manager level and undertaking a mapping of Warringah's core processes.

Systems views map relationships with stakeholders and were developed for each management area of council. The self-assessment identifies opportunities for improvements and areas of strength, and this was done by managers with



their staff. The self-assessments were then fed into the business plans for each section.

A team of approximately 20 staff undertook a process-improvement- technique training session held over 4 days. The training is titled *Plan Do Study Act* (PDSA) which focuses on finding and addressing the root cause of an issue rather than addressing symptoms. Again, the staff were trained to champion the technique across the organisation and to facilitate training of other staff.

Outcomes for governance

The ABEF provides a framework to assess strengths and opportunities and prioritise the opportunities. Ideally this means resources are used in appropriate areas and reduces waste. Warringah found that ABEF also empowers staff to take ownership of the issues and to initiate solutions.

Council is currently developing process maps for its Core Business Practices such as recruitment and purchasing. A process map is a diagrammatic representation of how something is done. Process mapping identified a number of opportunities for improvement and has shown inconsistencies in processes across council. The mapping also provides an opportunity to question why certain practices are undertaken. Processes improved as a result include leasing of photocopiers, printers, group certificate processing, key registers and induction processes.

PDSA provided a systematic approach to problem solving for Warringah. For example, Council found it could save on OH&S reporting. Rather than replacing the system as scheduled, the PDSA approach helped Council to identify a process improvement. This saved the organisation approximately \$32,000, by improving an existing system. In addition to the direct costs, staff now experience less frustration with the system.

Learning and reflections

The ABEF requires management to reflect on their role. Warringah found that, to be effective, the ABEF requires understanding and support of all of the Executive Team. For other councils, they would recommend taking small steps towards implementation and advise that *"you should not expect people to get it just because you have. You need to bring people along slowly."* Warringah also advises that it is worthwhile to bring on someone with experience in ABEF early in the implementation.



Australian Business Excellence Framework

Warringah staff responsible for the ABEF's implementation see it as '*a philosophical approach which is open to interpretation in a way that suits your council*'. Warringah found that the ABEF can and does change culture and that overall it is a highly enabling approach. However, it is a long-term investment and does not, of itself, lead towards a sustainability-focused culture. It is a tool to enable conversations, but '*you still need to swing the hammer*' to get results.

Council contact for further information

Business Excellence Manager
Warringah Council
Contact number: (02) 9942 2363

CASE STUDY: PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

Port Stephens Council has used the Business Excellence Framework since 2004. The Council wants to be recognised by its community as a leading Local Government authority and as an employer of choice – and has adopted the Business Excellence Framework to support this.

In Council's experience, the Business Excellence philosophy has provided a holistic approach to improvement that has fundamentally changed the culture of the organisation, as well as the behaviour and performance of staff. Port Stephens advises that the key to implementation is to make the philosophy relevant to the day-to-day work of individuals. Staff who have adopted the Business Excellence practices report that it has helped them to connect their work to the bigger picture and resulted in tangible improvements to their work.

Council contact for further information

Business Excellence Coordinator
Port Stephens Council
Contact number: (02) 4980 0371



Environmental Management Systems and the ISO 14001 Standard

Summary

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is an internationally-recognised framework for managing and minimising an organisation's impact on the environment. It is a systematic approach to identifying, measuring, managing and controlling environmental impacts. At a minimum it can ensure compliance with environmental protection legislation but can also be used as a means of improving environmental performance.

INTRODUCTION

ISO 14001 is the international standard for EMS. It was developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) which is a network of the national standards institutes of 162 countries including Standards Australia. The standard provides a framework for organisations developing an EMS, regardless of whether they intend to achieve certification to the ISO standard.

WHAT IS AN EMS?

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a set of methods for managing what an organisation does 'to both minimise harmful effects on the environment caused by its activities and to achieve continual improvement of its environmental performance.' The standard ISO 14001:2004 outlines the requirements an organisation's EMS must meet to receive certification. The companion standard ISO14004:2004 provides general guidelines on the principles, systems and support techniques for implementing an EMS. The components of a management system



include organisational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and resources for developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing and maintaining the environmental policy.

The aim of an EMS is to identify and control the risks to the environment of an organisation's activities and to achieve continual improvement. In this regard, the processes involved overlap to some degree with the risk assessment processing involved in managing Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) under the AS/NZS 4801 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems Standard. This has led to many councils integrating their EMS with their OH&S system. A Standards Australia document AS/NZS 4581 provides guidance on integrating these management systems.



Environmental Management Systems and the ISO 14001 Standard

INTENDED OUTCOMES

An EMS meeting the requirements of ISO 14001:2004 is a management tool that helps an organisation to:

- > identify and control the environmental impact of its activities, products or services
- > improve its environmental performance continually; and to
- > implement a systematic approach to setting environmental objectives and targets, to achieving these and to demonstrating that they have been achieved.

By using ISO-standard auditing and certification, organisations can provide assurance to management and external stakeholders / clients that their organisation is implementing an environmental policy that includes commitments to prevent pollution, continual improvement of the EMS and compliance with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

USE BY COUNCILS

Local Governments around the world have used this tool since the mid 1990s. ISO accredited councils in NSW include Bankstown City Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Cessnock City Council, Gosford City Council and Rockdale City Council. Several other councils, such as Marrickville Council, have an EMS in place but do not participate in the auditing and accreditation process. Councils often implement an EMS following an environmental pollution incident and may focus on the areas of operation that pose the highest risk of direct environmental pollution such as outdoor services and works.

STRENGTHS

Feedback suggested that as a widely used international standard EMS provides councils with a robust and recognisable tool.

It provides a systematic way of identifying, measuring and reporting on environmental impacts. Councils found that an EMS is useful to increase compliance with environmental protection legislation and to



limit liability for damage. Staff compliance with council's own environmental policies is important to maintain credibility on environmental issues, particularly the highly visible outdoor staff. The EMS standard also draws attention to the role of training and documentation to enable compliance with an environment policy.

Where there are separate OH&S and environmental management systems, some councils suggest that integrating them is more efficient – resulting in only one system to review and maintain. They suggest that environmental management systems can benefit from this arrangement because OH&S processes are deeply embedded in councils and involve all staff members. A number of councils report that the benefit of integration is that it provides a common forum to discuss risk management where environmental issues can get the same consideration as health and safety issues in designing work practices. Environmental management can also be added to existing OH&S staff participation and consultation frameworks and training events.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/ LIMITATIONS

The biggest limitation of an EMS is that it focuses on systems rather than outcomes. An EMS can be used as a strategic tool focused on improving environmental performance, but users find it is often limited to compliance with legislation. Some councils have found the auditing and accreditation process to be costly for the benefit provided and that it can be damaging to morale to fail an audit. However, others found audits valuable tools for systems improvement.

Regarding the integration of EMS with OH&S, the key limitation is that it can be difficult to maintain the focus on environmental management. In particular, where



Environmental Management Systems and the ISO 14001 Standard

councils have become self-insurers for OH&S, users report that the focus on environmental outcomes has been lost over time. Responsibility for the EMS needs to remain in the job description of a staff member with environmental management skills to support environmental protection outcomes.

COST AND TIME COMMITMENT

The ISO 14001 and 14004 standards can be purchased as a set from the SIA global website for \$140 in PDF form and \$154 printed. The AS/NZS 4581 Management System Integration standard can be purchased for \$73 PDF and \$81 printed. For a fee, several consultancies will provide a 'gap assessment' of actions needed to meet the standard, independent certification and training services.

An EMS is an ongoing system requiring a staff member to have responsibility for implementation and for training other staff. Many councils have had a full-time EMS co-ordinator during the first few years of the EMS. At Marrickville Council for example, managing the EMS takes about one third of the workload of a full-time staff member.

SUPPORT OFFERED

Several councils have established their EMS by themselves based on the ISO 14001 standard, staff experience in environmental management and advice from other councils. General training in EMS is provided by several consultants (see below) and is included in many Environmental Management or Auditing courses such as the TAFE Ryde College Environmental Auditing course. The Australian Government has produced guidance documents on developing an EMS for office based organisations which is available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/government/ems/index.html>

WHERE TO FIND

The ISO standard and associated guidance documents have several local distributors, including SIA Global (www.saiglobal.com), NCS international (www.ncsi.com.au) and BSI Australia (www.bsigroup.com.au) all of whom offer training and accreditation. The organisation JAS-ANZ (www.jas-anz.com.au) gives accreditation to certifying bodies and maintains a register of accredited assessment bodies.



CASE STUDY: MARRICKVILLE COUNCIL

Context

Marrickville Council is located in Sydney's inner west and has approximately 75,000 residents. The area is known for its multicultural inner-city living and comprises some of Sydney's oldest suburbs. Marrickville's 2025 vision includes striving to *'make Marrickville a centrepiece of inner-city ecologically sustainable development and environmentally sensitive principles through education, planning, programs, cooperation, and promotion of responsible individual and corporate conduct.'*

Marrickville Council has had an EMS since 1997. In the earlier years the EMS focused mainly on the operational staff based at the Depot and addressed the operational areas of waste and recycling, trades, parks, works, fleet, stores and street cleaning. The initial system was modelled on the ISO14000 standard but Marrickville has not sought to have their EMS accredited. Council introduced its integrated Environmental, Occupational Health & Safety and Injury Management system in 2001. The integrated system is known as SAFE (Safe And For the Environment). The implementation of the EMS has changed over time as Council moved through establishment, education, reporting and review phases.

Approach

Establishment of the EMS focused on setting up processes and reporting requirements, with standard forms introduced for incident reporting, inspection checklists and risk assessments. Introducing the system meant generating staff awareness, identifying training needs and formally training key staff members in environmental management.

Reporting is an ongoing focus for the SAFE system, with monthly committee meetings and annual management plans to report to and against. Reporting has centred on the key performance indicators



Environmental Management Systems and the ISO 14001 Standard

including the number of incidents, greenhouse emissions, water consumption and the generation of waste. Following several years of successful implementation of the SAFE system; a formal review process has been initiated to gain independent expert advice on gaps in the system and improvements for efficiency and streamlining.

A team of people coordinate the SAFE system including the Workers Compensation and OH&S Coordinator, OH&S Advisor, SAFE Administrator and the Environment Strategy and Systems Coordinator. The responsibilities and accountabilities within the SAFE system are communicated to employees through the SAFE Manual, the SAFE Annual Management Plan, job and person specifications, annual development plans and annual key result areas for General Manager, Directors and Managers.

Outcomes for sustainability

The SAFE system has improved management of spills and hazardous waste and reduced environmental pollution occurrences from Council's operations. It has resulted in a more effective use of resources and increased staff awareness of environmental protection across all areas.

Specifically, with the SAFE Audit Program Council has improved sustainability in a number of its operations. For example, an audit of the Civil Works Business Unit highlighted the need for more effective recycling and reuse of clean soil, which was previously being removed from the work site and taken to landfill. As a result of the audit program, excavated clean soil is now reused in Council's Parks and Reserves.

Learning and reflections

Overall, Marrickville found that the EMS was useful to highlight the importance of environmental protection to the organisation, the senior staff and the community. Marrickville Council staff



responsible for the EMS advise that '*OH&S has a high profile within councils, so working with the OH&S system means that staff are given the same level of awareness and exposure to environmental management issues as well.*'

Staff advise that Marrickville's SAFE system is applicable to other councils and organisations, particularly those that have not taken an integrated approach to OH&S, environmental management, injury management and workers' compensation claims management and are interested in achieving cultural change in their organisation.

Council Contact for further information

Environment Strategy and Systems Coordinator
Marrickville Council
Contact number: (02) 9335 2069

CASE STUDY: GOSFORD CITY COUNCIL

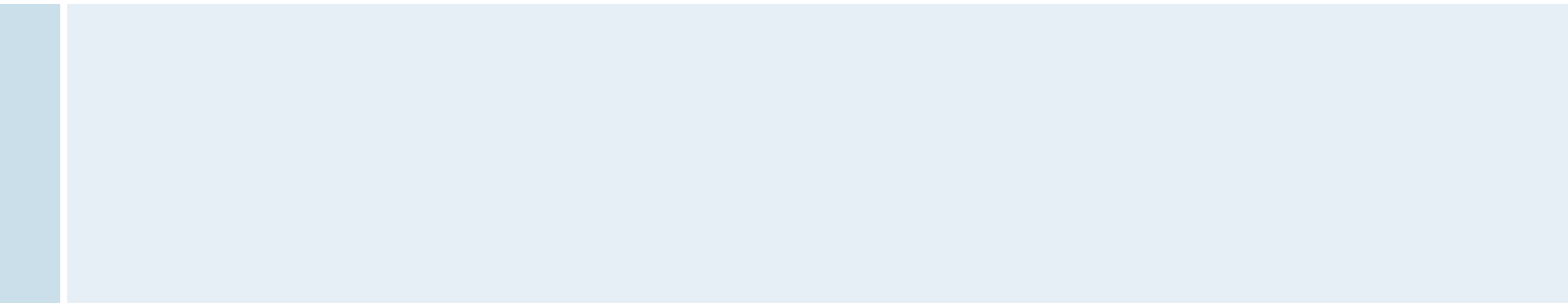
Gosford City Council also incorporated its EMS into their Integrated Management System. This took place in March 2003. Integrating both the Occupational Health and Safety System and the Environmental Management System into the one system involved extensive consultation with staff across Gosford City Council. A detailed case study of the integration process, written by Gosford's then EMS co-ordinator, is available on the EMS Association website (http://www.ems.asn.au/pubs/2008/papers/5955_stewart.htm)

Gosford used JAS-ANZ accredited auditors to audit the system to compliance with the Australian Standards. The compliance process took three years to achieve whole of Council certification. Gosford found the audits to be very helpful in guiding the development of the system.

Council contact for further information

IMS Coordinator
Gosford City Council
Contact number: (02) 4325 8222





Global Reporting Initiative Framework

Summary

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework is a tool that assists organisations to move beyond financial reporting and to report on the economic, environmental and social dimensions of their activities, products and services. The main elements of the framework, the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, include guidance on performance indicators and a common reporting language across private and public sectors. An increasing number of councils are using GRI materials which are available free of charge. Additional benefits and costs apply to those councils who choose to join the international GRI network of users.

INTRODUCTION

Supported by the Federal Government in Australia, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is a network-based international organisation established in 1997 with the mission of developing globally applicable guidelines for sustainability reporting. GRI internationally has a Governmental Advisors Group on which there is an Australian representative that will help ensure that the approach is relevant in the Australian context. The GRI Focal Point is hosted in Australia by St James Ethics Centre.

WHAT IS THE GRI FRAMEWORK?

The GRI framework sets out principles and indicators that organisations can use to measure and report on the economic, environmental, governance and social performance. The cornerstone of the framework is the *Sustainability Reporting Guidelines*. The third version of the Guidelines, known as the G3 Guidelines, was published in 2006.

As advised by GRI, the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines provide guidance

on “defining report content and quality, setting the report boundary, disclosure on management approach and indicator selection. They outline core content for reporting and are relevant to all organizations regardless of size, sector, or location. The G3 Guidelines outline a disclosure framework that organisations can voluntarily, flexibly, and incrementally adopt. The flexibility of the G3 format allows organizations to plot a path for continual improvement of their sustainability reporting practices.”

GRI is a broad approach intended for use by all organisations, not just in the private sector. Additional 'sector supplements' are produced for specialised guidance in certain sectors. The Public Agency Sector Supplement is intended for use by public sector organisations including Local Government. A pilot version is available which includes a supplementary list of indicators to the main reporting guidelines.



Global Reporting Initiative Framework

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- > Consistency across sectors through the use of common indicators, indicator protocols, rules and guidelines
- > Disclosure on economic, environmental and social performance becomes regarded as important to organisational success as financial reporting
- > The exchange of sustainability information and the continuous improvement of the Sustainability Reporting Framework through the participation of network members

USE BY COUNCILS

Councils draw on the GRI framework and tools in different ways. Several councils, including Warringah Council, advise that they use the GRI materials and keep up to date with developments although they can't make the commitment to report formally.

Councils in Australia who are organisational stakeholders (defined below) include Brisbane City Council, the City of Gosnells, the City of Melbourne and Penrith City Council who participated in the 2006 pilot *ANZ Reporting Alliance* along with eleven other departments, agencies and water utilities. Councils who have joined since include Hornsby City Council.

GRI advise that the '*Let's Report, GRI Level C report template*', could be more appropriate for smaller councils than the full reporting guidelines. This template uses a minimum of 10 performance indicators which include a minimum of one economic, one environmental and one social indicator.

STRENGTHS

The key strength of using the GRI framework is that it aligns councils with business and public sector sustainability reporting and provides a common reporting language. The KPMG International Survey of Corporate Responsibility Reporting 2008 revealed that 79% of Fortune 250 companies now produce sustainability reports and 77% base them on the GRI Guidelines.

The framework also aligns councils with broad international developments in the whole area of Corporate Social Responsibility and with broader international agreements including Earth Charter, UN Global Compact and the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment. To indicate the level of involvement and support for this tool, GRI advises that the materials have been developed through extensive consultation across thousands of stakeholders from many countries, are available in 22 languages and provide the



most widely used sustainability reporting framework in the world.

Councils who use the framework and the associated public sector supplement can compare and exchange information with other councils (see Ku-ring-gai Council case study below).

Benefits to organisations that register as an organisational stakeholder include the use of an exclusive logo, discounts, promotional benefits and access to the members only pages on the GRI website.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS / LIMITATIONS

The main consideration for councils considering whether to use the GRI framework is that it is just a framework and will need to be adapted to the specific business of the council. Organisations must develop or choose appropriate indicators, and councils using this tool advise others that they draw on other sources, besides the GRI.

It is primarily large City councils keen to demonstrate leadership that have signed up to date. No information had been provided at the time of writing of a council who had used the simpler *Let's Report* template. The capacity of the GRI staff based at the St

James Ethics Centre to provide workshops and training is limited but a plan is in place to introduce GRI Certified Trainers in Australia (see information below).

COSTS AND TIME COMMITMENT

A range of materials can be downloaded for free from the GRI website. These include the Sustainability Reporting framework, information on Application Level Checks, Indicator Protocols and Sector Supplements.

The cost of working with the GRI framework on an ongoing basis will depend on whether a council registers as an organisational stakeholder and the level of report that is used (beginner or advanced). Organisational stakeholders (members) pay a joining fee on a sliding scale, depending on the size of the organisation. Costs associated with training will depend on the training provider.

Based on the experience of several NSW councils who have used the GRI framework, there is a substantial commitment of staff time, both to establish the program and then to maintain and update it. Hornsby Shire Council (see case study below) estimated that one year of a staff



Global Reporting Initiative Framework

member's time was required to implement the GRI framework. However for councils interested in producing a beginners report, this time commitment may be significantly smaller.

SUPPORT OFFERED

If a council is thinking about preparing a report for the first time but doesn't know where to start or how to take the first step, they are encouraged to visit the GRI website:

<http://www.globalreporting.org/LearningAndSupport/SupportForReporters/>

The resources include information on tools, training and publications for beginner to advanced reporters.

The GRI Certified Training Program will be available shortly in Australia. It has been developed to help users to more effectively use the GRI Framework and GRI reports. The training program, generally a two-day program is run by local training organisations who are GRI certified. Currently there are four organisations in Australia undergoing the certification process and who will be listed on the GRI website when certification is complete. Councils looking for referrals to appropriate trainers could also check with other councils who are part of the GRI network.

WHERE TO FIND

The *Lets Report!* Template:
<http://www.globalreporting.org/LearningAndSupport/SupportForSMEs/>

Information on the Public Agency Sector Supplement:
<http://www.globalreporting.org/ReportingFramework/SectorSupplements/PublicAgency/>

Information on the GRI training program: <http://www.globalreporting.org/LearningAndSupport/TrainingAndWorkshops/CertifiedTrainingProgram/Training.htm>

Information on joining GRI as an Organisational Stakeholder can be obtained by contacting GRI at os@globalreporting.org

The GRI Network Manager, Focal Point Australia is based at the St James Ethic Centre and can be contacted on (02) 9299 9566.



CASE STUDY: HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL

Context

The Hornsby Shire, situated in the northern suburbs of Sydney, has a population of 157,000 residents and 65% of the area is natural bushland. The Council has a strong history of leadership in the sustainability field and was one of the first councils to apply the Triple Bottom Line framework.

The Hornsby Shire Council commenced reporting against the GRI indicators in 2006/07 in its Management Plan and Annual Report / Sustainability Report and continues to integrate GRI reporting into all key strategic documents. This tool was selected because it was seen to provide a balanced view of internal performance management, promote quality governance and strengthen stakeholder engagement. GRI reporting allowed Council to benchmark itself against internationally recognised indicators and make a meaningful and publicly transparent disclosure of their economic, environmental and social performance.

Approach

Council officers undertook training in 2007 through the Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting Alliance (now incorporated into ICLEI Sustainability Services). Reference material and the GRI guidelines were provided during the series of four or five training sessions held around the country over a period of 6 - 8 months. The two-day training was free, however officers were required to travel to Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney to attend workshops at the cost of approximately \$1,000. It is estimated that the equivalent of one full time staff member for a year was involved in establishing the reporting framework and adapting GRI indicators for inclusion within Council's corporate documents. Council reviewed both the total list of GRI indicators and its existing indicators in order to align them with Council's strategic themes within the Management Plan.



Global Reporting Initiative Framework

Learning and reflections

Through the process, Hornsby learned that an incremental approach was needed and that 'one size doesn't fit all' for the public sector supplement, which needed adapting to their context. They also found that it is important that all staff take ownership of the indicators and that they integrate the indicators with existing reporting practices.

Council staff report a number of benefits from working with the GRI framework, including:

- > streamlined reporting processes to better align and integrate economic, environmental and social practices
- > highlighted issues not previously considered, for example labour practices
- > supported a strategic and integrated approach to performance and management reporting
- > added credibility to their work and allowing Council to serve as a role model to other organisations in their community; and
- > drove change and innovation by influencing strategic planning, policy development and delivery.

By reporting against the GRI indicators and having the Management Plan and Annual Report/Sustainability Report independently reviewed, Council can now set organisation-wide targets to integrate sustainability reporting into its day-to-day practices, ensuring ongoing improvement and alignment to a TBL approach.



The GRI Reporting Guidelines are updated and modified on an ongoing basis. For example the current GR3 Guidelines were produced in 2006 and the previous GR2 Guidelines in 2002. Initially, Hornsby used a combination of the 2006 and 2002 guidelines, and an audit recommended that there should be consistent use of the 2006 framework.

Outcomes for sustainability

Council had its 2006/07 Annual Report/Sustainability Report and the 2007/08 Management Plan reviewed by an external auditor, the Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting. The review provided Council with the opportunity to improve its reporting mechanisms and identified overarching areas that might be improved over time. The Management Plan contains a GRI Content Index to enable the reader to easily locate the GRI disclosures and performance indicators selected by Council.

Council staff responsible for implementing the framework provide this advice to other councils considering adopting the GRI framework:

'Before a council adopts the GRI framework, we would encourage them to undertake a complete review of any indicators already being used, the range of GRI indicators and have a clear direction of what strategic goals their Council is trying to achieve'.

Council contact for further information

Manager Environmental Sustainability & Health
Hornsby Shire Council
Contact number: (02) 9847 6541



Global Reporting Initiative Framework

CASE STUDY: KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL

Ku-ring-gai Council, with funding from the NSW Environmental Trust in 2006, used the GRI Framework to assist in developing their Sustainability Plan.

Council staff report that the set of indicators associated with the G3 report are very flexible. GRI representatives encouraged Council to start small, look at what they were doing already and select GRI



indicators which best related to their work. Based on this advice, Council selected just ten GRI indicators in the first year for which information was readily available, and have added others over time. Staff advise that Council links a number of indicators that relate to specific council targets to the GRI indicators. For example the target of 6% reduction in Council's potable water consumption links in with the GRI EN 8 and EN 9 indicators relating to water use.

Ku-ring-gai Council is also working with neighbouring councils in the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) using the GRI Framework in the context of the NSROC Regional Sustainability Plan. Their approach is to develop one style of report and to develop a regional set of indicators. Council staff have found it very helpful to have other NSROC councils to consult and to compare approaches with.

Council contact for further information

Corporate Planner

Ku-ring-gai Council

Contact number: (02) 9242 0916



NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check

Summary

The NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check (SHC) is an assessment and management planning tool to measure the extent to which sustainability practices and principles are in place in council and to find ways to improve sustainability practices and outcomes.

The tool guides an assessment of internal organisational processes, and how those processes affect the council's organisational goals. Free advice and subsidised workshop facilitation for councils is available from the LGMA NSW until 2010, as part of its role in the USSA project. A range of councils from regional and urban areas have applied the SHC, particularly in the context of preparing strategic plans.

INTRODUCTION

The NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check (SHC) was developed by Sustainable Futures Australia for the Local Government Managers Australia NSW (LGMA NSW) and the then Department of Environment and Conservation NSW in 2006. It is currently managed by LGMA NSW, along with the Governance Health Check.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL

The Health Check has four parts. Parts A-D cover 'Preparation', 'Assessment of culture', 'Assessment of outcomes' and 'Integration'. The two assessment sections (Part B and Part C) can be undertaken in any order, or as stand-alone modules depending on council's needs. Both include the option to score or rate council's performance and a series of strategic questions that can be used as a SWOT analysis.

Part B asks questions that address corporate systems, strategic planning, operations and activities, leading by example, promoting change, listening and responding. The organisation identifies

improvements that can be made to management and operational systems as well as relationships, (internal and external), and encourages reflection on whether the council is creating a "culture of sustainability."

Part C assesses councils' efforts and activities towards achieving sustainability outcomes. The framework used is based on the five areas: ecology, society, economy, human habitat (infrastructure) and governance. Councils fill in a series of worksheets which result in an overall reflection, 'Are We Achieving Sustainability Outcomes?' The process looks at strengths, weaknesses, patterns in ratings, common issues and priority actions. Numeric rating of performance can be used.



NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- > Improved culture of sustainability across the council
- > Tailored action plan that can be delivered through existing corporate processes, for example delivery, operational or management plans
- > Improved council performance

USE BY COUNCILS

LGMA NSW report that an increasing number of councils from both regional and coastal areas are using this tool with usage rates nearing 20% of NSW councils. These include Blue Mountains City Council, Camden Council, Canterbury City Council, Eurobodalla Shire Council, Great Lakes Council, Greater Taree Council, Hornsby Shire Council, Hunters Hill Council, Lismore City Council, Orange City Council, Uralla Shire Council and Wagga Wagga City Council.

The SHC has been mainly used by councils at the planning stage in the corporate calendar, in particular when preparing integrated strategic plans (see Canterbury City Council case study). However councils have used it in different ways, for example to assist with the development of a specific strategy (see Wagga Wagga case study below). Councils generally undertake the reviews in a group workshop.

State-wide evaluation was conducted in 2008 and 2009 by both LGMA NSW and independent consultants on behalf of the NSW Government and Local Government Managers Australia. As a result minor revisions and improvements to the whole tool are being made over 2009 - 2010.

STRENGTHS

Feedback from councils indicates that by using the SHC, they have identified disparate activities and programs that are actually contributing to strategic goals yet had not previously been looked at together. Council staff like the fact that questions can be answered as laid out, or be amended to suit their own needs. They also report that it facilitates 'joined up' approaches and integration across departmental responsibilities.

LGMA NSW advise that the Sustainability Health Check is compatible with other processes and frameworks including the GRI (reporting) and the ABEF (organisational and quality improvement). It is also compatible with the Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements triggered by the 2009 amendments to the NSW Local Government Act.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/ LIMITATIONS

Councils that have already conducted detailed internal assessments and have quantitative data about their organisation's performance may not find that this tool adds much value.

Senior management will need to be briefed on the opportunities and benefits for the organisation before commencing the process. If the SHC is used to review the whole organisation, the endorsement and leadership of the General Manager is essential to ensure the findings can be acted upon.

Councils thinking about using this tool are encouraged to read the workbook and think about what they want to use the tool for before starting on the process, as it can be tailored to each council's area of focus. In light of challenges experienced by some councils with the number of questions in the worksheets, LGMA NSW advises that the users can amend or leave out questions to best suit their own needs.

COSTS AND TIME COMMITMENT

This tool can be downloaded free of charge from the LGMA NSW website. Hard copies of the workbook, worksheets and CD with high resolution worksheet templates can be ordered from LGMA NSW, which at the time of publication was \$100 & GST.

External facilitators have been used to conduct the workshop but this has not been regarded as expensive. For example, Wagga Wagga Council's direct costs associated with the SHC workshop, includes venue hire, catering and consultant costs, were approximately \$800 in total as they took advantage of the discounted rates offered by LGMA NSW through the USSA project.

Staff resources required for project management, participation in assessments and transferring findings to relevant corporate plans, vary depending on the depth of assessment chosen by the council.



NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check

SUPPORT OFFERED

The tool includes a workbook and spreadsheets designed for councils to self-manage and tailor the process according to their own priorities and situation. The workbook is clearly laid out for the project manager to follow.

Facilitated workshop sessions can be provided by LGMA NSW. A neighbouring council or previous user could also be asked to facilitate a workshop.

A number of case studies from large and small councils (both regional and coastal) are also publicly available on www.lgmansw.com.au and www.lgsa.org.au/ussa. Additional case studies collated using state-wide experiences of the tool cover project management tips to assist with getting the best outcome from the process.

WHERE TO FIND

Councils can download the tool (low resolution documents) for free from www.lgmansw.com.au as well as www.environment.nsw.gov.au. They can order a hard copy workbook, with accompanying CD, from the LGMA NSW office. Councils in other Australian states have also successfully used this tool.

Various SHC case studies are available on www.lgmansw.com.au and under 'case studies' at www.lgsa.org.au/ussa.

The Local Government Managers Australia (NSW) can be contacted on (02) 9648 1071.



CASE STUDY: WAGGA WAGGA CITY COUNCIL

Context

Wagga Wagga City Council, situated on the Murrumbidgee River in south-west NSW, has a population of 60,000 residents. Wagga Wagga is also a major retail/industry centre for the Riverina.

Council's Mission statement is to *'contribute to a vibrant and growing community by providing excellence in leadership, and delivery of 'best value' infrastructure and services, supporting quality living in an improving sustainable environment.'*

The Council decided to use the NSW Government Sustainability Health Check (SHC) to identify strengths, weaknesses and future actions prior to developing their Environmental Sustainability Strategy in the first half of 2009. The process took place from November to December 2008 and involved all of the Executive Team and Managers in reviewing internal processes of Council, identifying gaps and areas for improvement and also considering the major environmental issues facing the Local Government Area. Council chose the SHC based on the recommendation of other councils.

Approach

The Executive Team had already identified sustainability as one of the top ten priorities for council. This resulted in strong support from management to take part in the process. The Environmental Sustainability Strategy was overtly linked to the *Wagga Wagga City Council Community Strategic Plan 2008 - 2018*, integrating with economic, social and governance components of the plan.

As a first step Council developed a survey for all Managers and Directors before the SHC workshop. An internally facilitated workshop was held for managers to provide background on environmental issues identified through the State of the



NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check

Environment Report and to get them thinking about what is working well, what are the major concerns, what are some of the initiatives that they'd like to see implemented.

A half day SHC workshop was then held with managers and directors from all different sections of council, conducted by the LGMA NSW Sustainability Manager. The focus was on creating a culture of sustainability within council and with the community (SHC Part B). The collated results from the survey were presented at the workshop as background.

Learning and reflections

The SHC tool was the catalyst for discussions about environmental sustainability and Council's role in promoting sustainability and leading by example. The timing of the SHC workshop was considered by staff to be very good because it was early on in the development of the Strategy.

The survey worked well, as participants had considered the issues before the workshop which saved considerable time and they were able to gather people's personal thoughts as well as the groups' thoughts on each topic. The general 'environmental sustainability workshop' held before the SHC was implemented, was also valuable as it gave participants some background information about what to expect and demonstrated how the information was going to be used.

The biggest lesson learned by the organisers was that adequate time must be allocated to complete the workshop, as the topic sparks a lot of healthy discussion and debate. To maximise the outcomes from the workshop it is essential to ensure sufficient time to evaluate and document Council's performance against the SHC criteria. The excel spreadsheet templates provided (as part of the SHC Guidelines) were good for recording and collating the scores, but weren't as effective as anticipated for capturing all the information discussed.



Outcomes for sustainability

The results of the SHC process have been directly integrated into Council's draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy — which is now available for public comment. A pleasing outcome from the SHC review was that Council was actually performing at a higher level in some areas than was first anticipated. Council staff involved in the use of this tool sum up the benefits in this way:



“The SHC was a very useful tool that helped us reflect on where we were at on our sustainability journey and where we would like to be in the future. All of the outcomes from the SHC review contributed significantly to the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy.”

Council contact for further information

Environmental Sustainability Coordinator
Wagga Wagga City Council
Contact number: 1300 292442



NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check

CASE STUDY: CANTERBURY COUNCIL

Canterbury City Council used the full SHC tool in 2009 with the objectives of recognising the achievements they would make so far and refining and improving their City Strategic Plan. Canterbury used both the scoring and qualitative SWOT options in the worksheets which meant they were able to produce a semi-quantitative report. The process was regarded as sufficiently robust to provide a baseline against which to measure their progress towards sustainability in the future.

An important factor to the success was involving people from different parts of the organisation who could share a 'wealth of organisational knowledge.' Council acknowledges that the whole SHC process can seem quite complex and daunting when starting out, and suggest councils learn from the experiences of other councils in order to build confidence with using the tool.

For more information on the experience of Canterbury Council, and other NSW councils who have used the SHC, look under case studies on the USSA website: www.lgsa.org.au/USSA

Council contact for further information

Manager, Corporate Strategy
Canterbury City Council
Contact number: (02) 9789 9300



TechnologyOne Performance Planning

Summary

TechnologyOne Performance Planning is a software tool that supports councils to document, monitor, report on and manage their plans and performance against those plans. Where sustainability principles are strongly embedded in strategic plans, planning and reporting software can help measure and manage the realization of those plans.

INTRODUCTION

TechnologyOne is an Australian software company and Performance Planning is one part of their set of software products was developed specifically to address Local Government planning needs. The software has been available since 2002 (then known as Outcome Manager) and is updated every six months based on customer feedback.

WHAT IS PERFORMANCE PLANNING?

TechnologyOne describe Performance Planning as “a purpose built solution to document, manage and report on all aspects of strategic and operational planning, including risk and sustainability issues.” The software helps align different planning processes into a single management framework. It deals with strategic plans that focus on outcomes as well as operational plans focused on projects and services. Processes relating to governance, risk, auditing and project management

can also be incorporated. All activities are linked to relevant plan components such as outcomes, outputs, business units, services and projects. The tool then links these activities to financial, infrastructure and human resources. With role-based views, staff can see all the activities they are responsible for and report against them.

Once established, the software allows monitoring and reporting against planned activities and objectives using different types of indicators at different levels. Data is entered once, and is then reported in several ways through ‘traffic light’ indicators (red-amber-green), graphs and tables. Using this data, the software can generate recurring and ad-hoc reports for management.

The default planning perspective is QBL, however the program is flexible and can accommodate other sustainability frameworks. The software has been designed to be compatible with the G3 Guidelines on sustainability reporting developed by the Global Reporting Initiative.



TechnologyOne Performance Planning

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- > Identifying and documenting strategic objectives and initiatives and linking these to various plans (strategic, medium-term and annual plans)
- > Assignment of ownership and accountability to planned activities across the organisation
- > Ability to monitor progress and report on targets achieved, the completion of initiatives, and adherence to statutory and policy standards through quantitative measures and qualitative assessments; and
- > Assist in communicating to individual staff members how their work links to various plans and to the organisation as a whole.

USE BY COUNCILS

More than 20 NSW councils use Performance Planning. These include both metropolitan councils such as City of Sydney, Penrith City Council, Ku-ring-gai Council and Hornsby Shire Council and regional councils such as Albury City Council.

STRENGTHS

Councils found that planning and reporting software can help to integrate, measure and report on strategic plans at multiple levels. A user described it as aiming to make sure that good work done in strategic planning is linked to the day-to-day work and projects of council. If sustainability principles are strongly embedded in strategic plans, good governance systems can help to realise them. Reporting and monitoring can be done without specialised software, however councils have found software can improve the reporting processes, and reduce the time it takes to



produce a report. Several councils mentioned that a key consideration in selecting a planning and reporting software package was its integration with other software tools, particularly finance tools, already in use within a particular council.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/ LIMITATIONS

Some councils have found that integrated planning and reporting software packages were too complicated for their needs. They reported that the tools require a constant feed of information to create meaningful reports. As such, the reporting is only as good as the ability of staff to record and enter information. In addition, like any reporting process, software tools require meaningful indicators to produce meaningful reports. Councils should consider that there are several commercial planning and reporting software packages, for example CAMM Interplan®, and that a tender process may be required to select the tool which is most suitable for a particular council.

COST AND TIME COMMITMENT

Performance Planning is off-the-shelf software with an initial licence fee followed by an annual support and maintenance fee which is based on the size of the organisation. Users can access customer support services, such as the help desk, and get automatic access to upgrades and enhancements as part of the regular software release program.

TechnologyOne has a team of business consultants who work with council officers to install the software, train staff and undertake the initial phases of set-up, usually within a few weeks. They report that the initial implementation of Performance Planning can be accomplished within a 4 - 6 week timeframe (software installed, the users trained and several plans incorporated). More typically, councils choose to phase the project over 3 - 4 months to allow for feedback and staff education.



TechnologyOne Performance Planning

SUPPORT OFFERED

The annual maintenance fee covers access to the TechnologyOne Service Desk online, by email or phone. For more complex issues or critical software fixes, the Service Desk has direct access to the TechnologyOne Research and Development department. Higher levels of support for users are also available for a fee. TechnologyOne can advise on the use of the software to facilitate responses to the Integrated Planning & Reporting legislation.

WHERE TO FIND

Performance Planning can be obtained through TechnologyOne, which develops, sells, supports and implements the software. Contact can be made via the Sydney office at 76 Berry Street, North Sydney NSW 2060, Phone: (02) 9460 1000, www.TechnologyOneCorp.com



CASE STUDY: KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL

Context

Ku-ring-gai Council began using the performance planning system in 2007 as part of an overall planning and reporting framework review. The tool used previously was time consuming and isolated, and didn't allow integration or effective accountability of the actions within plans and strategies. The Performance Planning tool was initially used for the set up, delivery and progress reporting of the Management Plan, with other plans and strategies to follow.

Approach

As with all new software, this system has required ongoing staff training, changes to some past work practices and systems and integration with others. A systems administrator maintains the system and builds in any new plans or strategies. A number of other key staff maintain the user information and will be trained to run divisional reports. The cost of the software is included in the IT budget and there is an ongoing maintenance fee.

Outcomes for sustainability

The performance planning tool has allowed Council to progress significantly in the past two years to link KPIs and outcome areas within the Management Plan. This has helped integrate Council's long term sustainability plan with other plans and strategies and sets the scene for improvements in accountability and transparency across all levels of Council activity. With the integration of plans and strategies, managers and directors have more detailed information which assists their decision-making.

The tool is currently being upgraded to better link to financial information. Council hopes that this will provide more detailed information for reports on sustainability-related activities including



TechnologyOne Performance Planning

energy efficiency projects and procurement practices. This greater detail will allow Council to make more informed decisions towards sustainable practice.

Learning and reflections

Ku-ring-gai Council would recommend that before implementing the tool, councils should research what they want it to achieve. Ku-ring-gai found that more education upfront with the key users (managers) would have been beneficial. This means showing the users where they will benefit directly. They advise that a good education program incorporated into the systems training will help to overcome this issue. In addition, talking to other council users and borrowing their templates might save a lot of time in the initial set up stages.

Overall, Council found that the tool did help set up the framework for council's plans and strategies. Council staff advise that the tool *'enabled improved integration with other plans and strategies and improved reporting processes, both reducing the time it takes to report and increasing the type of reports that can be generated'*. It also improved the accountability of activities and services.

Council contact for further information

Corporate Planner
Ku-ring-gai Council
Contact: (02) 9424 0916



CASE STUDY: ALBURY CITY COUNCIL

Albury City Council have used the Outcome Manager (now TechnologyOne Performance Planning) project management package over several years. Their corporate plan has projects or activities described for all key performance goals. These then become blocks of work which are listed in the Performance Planning Tool. A staff member described the usefulness for sustainability by saying *'these tools are designed to manage projects - you just need to package what you do as a sustainability project and include it along with everything else.'* They found that incorporating sustainability work by using an existing package really helped with training and cultural acceptance rather than introducing a new system. With good governance systems like this in place they found it is easier to foster a sustainability culture within the organisation.

Council contact for further information

Sustainability Officer
Albury City Council
Contact number: (02) 6023 8396



Operational Tools

Tools included in this section

1. Outcome Hierarchy Framework
2. Ryde Sustainability Tool
3. SSROC Sustainability Guidelines for Decision Makers, Volume 2
4. Sustainability Advantage
5. Sustainable Choice

NEEDS ADDRESSED THROUGH THESE TOOLS

These five tools can help if your council is asking questions like:

- > How can we review our application of sustainability to the day-to-day operational activities of council – facilities management, parks & gardens, civil works, events?
- > Our council has a 'triple bottom line' policy but it isn't reflected in many of the decisions and activities of council.
- > What tools are available to assist all council departments to make more sustainable purchasing decisions?
- > How can we demonstrate to council that our educational program has been successful in changing behaviour?



Outcome Hierarchy Framework

Summary

The Outcome Hierarchy Framework is a program planning tool that is promoted by the NSW Government to assist councils in planning and evaluating programs, including Sustainability for Education programs. It is also a component of the funding agreement between councils and NSW Environmental Trust programs. If it is integrated into program planning from the beginning, and applied well, it can assist program managers to quantify the effectiveness of their program or project in the short and longer term.

INTRODUCTION

In 2004 the NSW Government Department of Environment and Conservation (now DECCW) produced the publication *Does Your Project Make a Difference: A Guide to Evaluating Environmental Education Projects and Programs* based on the outcome hierarchy framework.* It is promoted by DECCW as a tool to assist program planning and evaluation, and a number of agencies including the NSW Environmental Trust use outcome monitoring as part of their funding agreement for a range of their programs.

DESCRIPTION OF OUTCOMES HIERARCHY

The outcome hierarchy is described as a “thinking tool which organises short to long term outcomes of a project in an ordered sequence that has a cause and effect relationship with each other – with the highest level being the ultimate outcome desired as a result of the project.”** The table below briefly explains the hierarchy. When using the table for evaluation it should be read from the bottom up.

Outcome Hierarchy	Definitions
Ultimate Outcomes ↑	Describes the impact of the overall program and the ultimate program goals in biophysical, social, economic, organisational or communication terms
Intermediate Outcomes ↑	Describes changes in individual and group knowledge, skills, attitudes, aspirations, intentions, practices and behaviours
Intermediate Outcomes ↑	Describe levels and nature of participation and reactions to the activities to engage participants
Activities ↑	Describe the activities that the program will create to engage participants
Needs ↑	Describe what needs to happen to address the problem – the difference between the desired and actual state of the issue
Issue and Context ↑	Identifies the priority issues/problems, the socio-economic/political/organisational context for the problem and its stakeholders

* There are several categories of evaluation tools which use an outcomes model. The outcome hierarchy framework is based on program logic, which is an accepted theoretical framework for program planning and evaluation across a range of social change initiatives.

** DECC (2004) *Does Your Project Make a Difference: A Guide to Evaluating Environmental Education Projects and Programs*



Outcome Hierarchy Framework

The publication *Does Your Project Make a Difference?* provides guidance for those planning and delivering Education for Sustainability Programs. It allows users to better understand evaluation and to build it into the program from the beginning, using the outcome hierarchy framework. This publication uses the outcome hierarchy to evaluate Education for Sustainability Programs, however, program logic tools can be used to plan and evaluate other types of programs, such as compliance programs and incentives and subsidies.

Program logic using the outcome hierarchy is also used as the planning framework in DECCW's 2009 publication *Guide to Using Research in Sustainability Programs*, designed to complement *Does Your Project make a Difference?* by focusing on the use of research throughout the program cycle.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

By evaluating a program or project within the outcome hierarchy, program and project managers are:

- > provided with evidence of the impact of a program across a range of levels able to clearly identify and distinguish between

outcomes that meet program objectives and those which are a necessary precursor to those ultimate outcomes

- > given confidence in making decisions about adjustments to the project/program and continually improving the project or program; and
- > assisted in validating/reporting on to external stakeholders.

USE BY COUNCILS

Councils in NSW who have received funding from a range of NSW Environmental Trust and DECCW programs have been required to use this framework as part of reporting requirements. As a result it has been applied by councils to a range of projects, both small and large since 2004.

Some councils are integrating different approaches to evaluation in conjunction with the outcome hierarchy, for example Blue Mountains City Council who are using an Appreciative Inquiry approach (see case study below).



STRENGTHS

The main strength of the outcome hierarchy framework, if used well, is that it provides a structured approach to thinking about the cause and effect relationship between a program and the expected outcomes of that program. It also helps in thinking through a range of evaluation questions related to each outcome. These questions include 'Does the program address the needs?', 'Does the program work?', 'Does it achieve the desired objectives/outcomes?', 'Is it cost effective?', 'Is it well managed?'

Does Your Project Make a Difference?, provides guidance in using the outcome hierarchy framework and a general introduction to the discipline of evaluation for education and behaviour change in projects. Useful features include hypothetical case studies based on the outcome hierarchy, an overview of standards and guidelines for program evaluation and a brief description of some of the evaluation tools.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/ LIMITATIONS

Consistent feedback from councils indicates that the outcome hierarchy framework is difficult conceptually and not an easy tool to pick up and use from written guidelines alone. DECCW staff are aware of this feedback and stress the following points:

- > The outcome hierarchy tool needs to be viewed as a project planning tool and requires users to think as a team as to how the project will be measured
- > Sufficient resources and time must be made available for quality evaluation to occur; and
- > Often training in evaluation skills is required for this tool to be used effectively.

Councils also report that it is often difficult to obtain credible data to populate the outcome hierarchy, and then to analyse it. To assist with this need, the companion guide mentioned above, *Guide to using research in sustainability programs*, will help program managers better understand how to plan for research. The new guide includes fully worked case studies from this different focus.



Outcome Hierarchy Framework

COST AND TIME COMMITMENT

The publication and associated materials are free of charge. They are available in hard copy and online at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research/socialresearch.htm>. As indicated above, adequate time is required to plan the evaluation and to carry it out, especially if it is to be done in-house. The direct costs associated with the actual evaluation methodology, for example survey design, collection and analysis, will need to be factored in when planning and budgeting for the project. It is suggested that this should be approximately 10% of the total project budget. Where councils are evaluating large and complex projects, or do not have the staff resources, external evaluation experts are often used.

SUPPORT OFFERED

DECCW has provided free training in evaluation for a number of years which has helped to build a culture of evaluation amongst educators in councils. The Local Government sector is now being encouraged to resource training for staff on an ongoing basis.

The Australian Association for Environmental Education, the Waste Management Association of Australia, the Australian Water Association and the Marine Educators Society of Australasia are collaborating to produce a series of recognised professional development short courses for educators. A short course module on evaluation, based on the outcome hierarchy framework, is likely to be included. Councils will be advised on how to access these training modules once they are complete.

WHERE TO FIND

The document *Does your project make a difference: A guide to evaluating environmental education projects and programs* can be downloaded from the DECCW website: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/projecteval.htm>

The document *Guide to using research in sustainability programs* can also be downloaded from the DECCW website: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/researchguide.htm>



CASE STUDY: WOLLONGONG, KIAMA AND SHELLHARBOUR COUNCILS

Context

Wollongong, Kiama and Shellharbour Council areas are situated between the Illawarra escarpment and coastal beaches south of Sydney. They have a joint population of 280,000 residents.

The Outcomes Hierarchy Framework was applied at the very beginning of the Sustainable Illawarra Project, a regional community education project run in partnership between the three councils and supported by the NSW Environmental Trust. The project involves the preparation of a roadmap to facilitate the integration of sustainable practises into council operations, a pilot stormwater harvesting/reuse project in each LGA and a community education project called 'Sustainability Begins At Home.'

Project staff report using the outcome hierarchy as a tool both because it was a requirement of the Business Plan submission for this project and because they found it a valuable approach to assisting their thinking on what they ultimately wanted the project to achieve, their methods for reaching those proposed



Outcome Hierarchy Framework

outcomes and how they would evaluate the success of the project.

Approach

The project was broken down into sections due to the greater complexity of the community education project component. The team used a brainstorming approach to develop the outcome hierarchy for the project component which helped reach consensus on the desired outcomes.

There was no staff training required to develop the outcome hierarchy as all the team members had used the tool before.

Learnings / reflections

Staff members found that the outcome hierarchy to be very useful in project planning. It allowed them to break down the planning process into manageable parts.

Just as importantly it assisted project staff in determining what kind of activities could be undertaken to reach the agreed outcomes, and to ensure a logical link between selected activities and the intermediate and ultimate project outcomes.

Outcomes for Sustainability

As the Sustainability Illawarra Project is still in progress, a final evaluation which measures the overall success of the project is yet to be undertaken. However the project team representing the three councils can report on the benefits of the outcome hierarchy framework as a planning tool and feel confident that this will result in more effective results in the long term.

Council contact for further information

Project Manager, Sustainable Illawarra

Wollongong City Council

Contact number: (02) 4227 7367



CASE STUDY: BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL

Context

The Blue Mountains LGA covers 143,000 hectares of land in the Greater Sydney Region. About 70% of the area is incorporated into the World Heritage Blue Mountains National Park. The resident population for the Blue Mountains is 73,000 people who live in, or in the vicinity of, 27 towns and villages.

Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) has extensive experience with evaluation for externally funded sustainability related projects, and with the use of the outcome hierarchy framework. Council staff have attended educational workshops to better understand and apply an outcomes model. While useful and appropriate for council staff, questions have arisen regarding how to effectively use the hierarchy when working in partnership with the community. This case study explores the approach taken by Council in using a complementary approach when working with community partners - merging Appreciative Inquiry with the outcome hierarchy model.

Appreciative Inquiry describes an approach to working with organisations and communities that focuses on strengths rather than problems, and on where the energy is for change. In the case of evaluation, a greater focus is placed on what went right, rather than what went wrong. *

Approach

The need to think differently about approaches to outcomes is illustrated through the experience of staff working with community partners on a three year community education program in Wentworth Falls, a village in the Blue Mountains. The education program, "Wentworth Falls Lake, It's a Living Thing", was concerned with reducing residential impact on the water quality of the Wentworth Falls Lake. BMCC had built up good

* Further details on Appreciative Inquiry can be found at: http://www.icvet.tafensw.edu.au/resources/appreciative_inquiry.htm and at <http://appreciativeinquiry.net.au>



Outcome Hierarchy Framework

baseline data for water quality over a number of years as well as gathering results of community surveys which strongly support the protection of waterways. This information was able to be used in developing targets and indicators – important aspects of the outcome hierarchy.

Learning and reflections

BMCC staff came to learn that while community partners understood the concept of 'ultimate outcomes', they often have a different ultimate outcome than those contained in the grant applications. In the case of Wentworth Falls Lake project, the main participating community organisation had as its ultimate outcome the construction of a board walk around the lake. It was understood that this outcome was not in conflict with environmental education outcomes and that the board walk could reduce random paths and increase understanding about the value of the lake. However it was important to find a way of reconciling the different views of what the project was intended to achieve.

It was also realised that the wider community (apart from land conservation volunteer groups such as Bushcare and Landcare) did not readily understand the significance of water quality data, or the scientific methodology informing the collection of the data. By way of example, notices which recommend 'swim' and 'no swim' days were regularly thrown into the lake. It was felt that this mattered because the changes being measured need to have both organisational and community support.

Council staff were keen for the evaluation component of new education programs to be developed collaboratively and for evaluation to be 'more of a conversation' with community partners. Appreciative Inquiry was chosen as a complementary approach to outcomes hierarchy in working with the community centres on the project *Seedpods: Sustainable Early Childhood Services in the Blue Mountains*. The project aims to increase



sustainability practices at the centres, and to provide sustainability education resources on water, waste, energy, wildlife and sense of place.

Rather than inquire into the absence or presence of sustainability practices and early childhood education, Appreciative Inquiry is being used to inquire into the growth of the outcomes that program partners wish to achieve over time.

Outcomes for sustainability

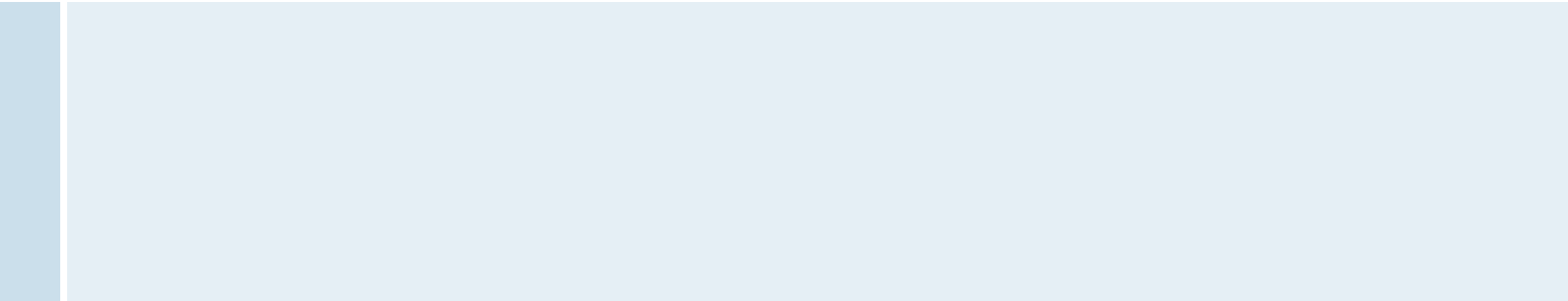
At the time of writing the council is mid way through the project. Ten percent of the funding has been allocated for evaluation which has enabled the employment of an external facilitator to assist in applying these approaches in a complementary way. A revised outcomes hierarchy utilising Appreciative Inquiry is now being drafted.

BMCC sustainability staff have a strong commitment to trialling new approaches that improve outcomes and to building a community of practice amongst sustainability educators. They are keen to share their learnings and reflections as the project progresses.

Council contact for further information

Education for Sustainability team
Blue Mountains City Council
Contact number: (02) 4780 5788





Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol

Summary

The Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol is an example of a council developing its own decision-making tool based on quadruple bottom line (QBL) principles. The protocol is a template for project managers to assess a proposed project or activity against the four key outcome areas (environment, people, governance and assets) of Council's Management Plan. It encourages staff to identify opportunities to improve the sustainability of their project and was designed through close consultation with City of Ryde staff.

INTRODUCTION

Several councils have developed in-house tools to assess project proposals against multiple sustainability criteria. These tools aim to align the process used within council to assess proposed projects to the TBL or QBL values used in public reporting and strategic plans. The City of Ryde's Environment Service Unit has developed a tool called the Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol as part of the Ryde 2030 Community Strategic Planning process.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL?

The Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol (also known as sustainability scorecard) is a template for QBL assessment of proposed projects. It is a five page template for project managers to assess their project against the City of Ryde's four key sustainability indicators: environment, people, governance and

assets. Each key indicator is on a separate sheet and has six sub-indicators that were drawn from the key outcome areas (KOAs) identified in the City of Ryde's Management Plan.

The protocol is designed to be applied to any project, practice, policy or activity to help facilitate cultural and behavioural change towards improved sustainability initiatives. It should be applied as early in the project planning as possible, at the concept stage or when developing a project brief or project management plan. The tool is not meant to pass or fail projects; it instead encourages staff to look for opportunities to improve the sustainability of any project in each of the QBL areas. The sustainability assessment supplements the organisation's requirement to address key outcome areas in reports to Council.



Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- > Ensuring that project managers give consideration to the links between a proposed project and the KOAs listed in Council's Management Plan
- > Soliciting behaviour change by encouraging staff to identify options that may lead to their projects better delivering on Council's KOAs of environment, people, governance and assets
- > Increasing awareness and understanding of the dimensions of sustainability by council staff

USE BY COUNCILS

Other Councils have not yet used the Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol. At the time of writing, the protocol is part way through its third round of trials at the City of Ryde during which it will be used to assess 30 projects. The protocol has been presented to the ICLEI World Congress in Edmonton, Canada and to various Regions of Councils such as CENTROC and to the Sunshine Coast Regional

Advisory Committee, and was received very positively by those groups.

A number of other councils have also developed triple or quadruple bottom line project assessments or incorporated a brief assessment into their council report templates. One example is the project assessment questionnaire titled 'Sustainability Assessment for Council Reports' in the TBL toolkit developed by the City of Melbourne working with ICLEI Oceania in 2002. Several councils have drawn on this example in developing a tool of their own, including Hornsby Shire Council and Penrith City Council who have adapted parts of the ICLEI/ City of Melbourne TBL toolkit to develop their own approach to TBL reporting.

STRENGTHS

The City of Ryde considers the key strengths of the tool to be its strong links to Council's Management Plan, its simplicity and its focus on educating staff. Compared to other project assessment frameworks tested by the City of Ryde, this in-house tool enables staff to assess

a project quickly and focuses on guiding thinking rather than making a technical assessment of a project.

Being a council-developed tool, the designers believe it would be easy for other councils to transfer the key concepts to the outcome areas in their own organisation.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/ LIMITATIONS

The City of Ryde advises that the tool would need to be adapted to the needs of any council seeking to adopt it. In particular, a council would need to connect it to the Management Plan of that council. It is also important that all sections of council are engaged in the process of adapting the tool. Having worked with several councils in developing project assessment tools, ICLEI staff echo this concern. ICLEI feel that the collaborative process of developing the tool is more important to the success of the tool than the design of the final project assessment template.



COST AND TIME COMMITMENT

The initial process of designing and testing the tool has been a 15-month process for the City of Ryde, however it is likely that less time would be required for other councils to adapt the protocol. Ryde worked with a consultant to help develop the protocol, facilitate staff workshops, present an independent view to staff and to help test the draft protocol using their networks outside the organisation.

The Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol is free for other councils to use, so long as the City of Ryde is acknowledged as the source. There is an ongoing time commitment to training staff and reviewing completed Assessment Protocols as needed. The City of Ryde Environment Team provides a one-hour briefing on the protocol every quarter to the Council's staff. All project managers or potential project managers are encouraged to attend that briefing before using the Assessment Protocol. Once staff are trained in using the

template, applying the tool to assess an individual project is a quick process.

SUPPORT OFFERED

The City of Ryde have provided a case study for this guide. The tool is quite self-explanatory and Ryde have produced guidance notes to accompany the tool including some example responses.

If a council wants to develop its own TBL or QBL assessment tool, ICLEI Oceania is able to work with councils on a fee-for-service basis, either using the ICLEI/City of Melbourne TBL Toolkit as a basis or using a structured tool development approach. Other consultants may also be able to provide similar support.

WHERE TO FIND

The City of Ryde can make the protocol available to other councils and, at the time of writing, is considering making the protocol available on its website once the internal trial process is complete. Visit:

www.ryde.nsw.gov.au

The ICLEI/City of Melbourne TBL toolkit is freely available on the City of Melbourne's website.

Access the toolkit at www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/info.cfm?top=166&pg=1197



Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol

CASE STUDY: THE CITY OF RYDE PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

Context

The City of Ryde lies in the central northern part of the Sydney Metropolitan area, approximately 12km from the centre of Sydney. The City occupies most of the divide between the Parramatta and Lane Cove rivers, and has 16 suburbs within its boundaries. The Council's vision is that '*Ryde will be an innovative City, a leader in environmental, economic and social sustainability*'.

The City of Ryde developed the sustainability scorecard to ensure that all personnel involved in project development and management understood and responded to Council's commitment to sustainability. The initial motivation for the scorecard was the need for consistent implementation of this commitment across all disciplines in the organisation.

The Council needed a tool that addressed each aspect of the Management Plan and encouraged thinking across each of the key aspects of the Management Plan for any project, policy or activity, to ensure balanced sustainable outcomes. They wanted a protocol that was accepted across the organisation, was simple to use and not too time consuming.

Approach

The protocol was developed by the Environment Service Unit over 15 months through close consultation with the City of Ryde staff. Over this time two versions of the protocol were developed.

The first version of the protocol was more scientifically rigorous and methodical than the current version. It was based on a star rating system, had fewer open ended questions and would have relied on software in order to calculate the results. When tested with a workshop of project managers, users found it too difficult to understand and too time consuming to complete for every project.

Following this feedback a second version of the protocol was developed. The scoring system was simplified and the focus of the tool was



changed to be more educative. Numerous workshops targeting key users were held and the tool was tested and refined to engage the users and solicit ownership of the tool. The support of an external consultant was useful in helping to develop and test both versions of the protocol. The consultant also facilitated the staff workshops and provided an independent viewpoint to staff.

Outcomes for sustainability

The City of Ryde staff advise that the tool 'is forcing a level of thinking that hasn't been there in applying QBL principles.' The Protocol has been successfully applied to a range of projects including a new cogeneration plant, a new bus shelter, a new road, a proposed community engagement policy, the Granny Smith Festival, a new community bus transport service and a transport access guide project.

Applying the protocol encourages project managers to think about their projects more broadly and this enables change towards improved sustainability initiatives. The application of the tool to a road project is a good example of this — a low score for environment indicators prompted the installation of a roadside rain garden and more advanced street plantings to improve the environmental aspects of the proposal.

Learnings / Reflections

The protocol is still in its testing phases, but already the Council has found that the benefit of the tool is that it is quick and easy for staff to use. Staff have found that the tool allows *'flexibility for project managers to identify sustainability improvements to any project, without the tool being used to knock out projects.'*



Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment Protocol

Staff note that there are opportunities to expand the use of the protocol to help prioritise future projects.

Council contact for further information

Environment Service Manager
The City of Ryde
Contact number: (02) 9952 8222

CASE STUDY: WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL - QBL MATRIX

Wingecarribee Council developed a Quadruple Bottom Line matrix in late 2008 for assessing budget bids in line with the council's Management Plan. It is noted that was not based on the Ryde Project Sustainability Assessment tool but developed internally drawing on QBL principles. The economic, social, environmental and governance criteria and a scoring guide are built into the template matrix. The assessment is designed so that each project is assigned a score against each of the criteria and the results are sent to the Executive to assess.

In using the tool, Council found that governance concerns such as cost-effectiveness and compliance with legislation were considered to be key project requirements and so were difficult to compare with economic, social or environmental impacts. For this reason, the process shifted to focusing on triple bottom line impact in the assessment matrix (economic, social or environmental) with Council addressing governance issues separately. The matrix has proven to be a valuable tool and there is strong support across the organisation for using the tool to assess budget bids in the future.

Council contact for further information

Corporate Planner
Wingecarribee Shire Council
Contact number: (02) 4868 0760



SSROC Sustainability Guidelines for Decision Makers, Volume 2

Summary

The Sustainability Guidelines for Decision Makers are a set of tools originally developed for SSROC Councils for assessing council departmental activities and services using ESD principles and now made generally available through the SSROC website. Experience shows that they are straightforward to use, and there are no costs in acquiring them.

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainability Guidelines for Decision Makers, published in 2000, were developed in consultation with the sixteen member councils of the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC). They introduce Councillors and Council staff to sustainability and how it relates to the work of Councils. Volume 1 provided councils with a series of checklists to ensure sustainability was incorporated in planning and design controls, in their role as regulators. These have now largely been superseded by NSW BASIX legislation, and are not included in this review.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GUIDELINES

Volume 2 is designed for Councils' own operations, and enables self-assessment by identifying ways in which Council operations can be more or less sustainable. It uses a series of checklists to obtain a sustainability score for whether a department's activities are heading in a 'more sustainable' or 'less sustainable' direction.

Council functions covered by the guide includes:

- > Beach management
- > Building maintenance
- > Community services
- > Contract specification
- > Corporate services and public relations
- > Environmental management
- > Fleet Management
- > Health/ rangers
- > Human resources
- > Kitchen/ catering
- > Landscaping and parks management
- > Libraries
- > Mechanical workshop
- > Painters/ Sign shop
- > Pest Management and Weed Control
- > Policy making
- > Property
- > Purchasing
- > Senior Management
- > Sport and Recreation
- > Stormwater Management
- > Strategic Planning



SSROC Sustainability Guidelines for Decision Makers, Volume 2

- > Street cleaning services
- > Tourism Development
- > Transport Planning and Infrastructure
- > Waste Education
- > Waste Management

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- > Improved understanding of OESD principles among Councillors and other decision makers
- > Improved capacity to accommodate sustainability into the functions of Council departments
- > Improved capacity to identify, reduce and eliminate unsustainable practices

USE BY COUNCILS

The actual number of councils using the tool is not known but it has been made available to councils both within SSROC and more widely, for example through the UTS Centre for Local Government Course, *Integrating Sustainability: Managing for Better Outcomes*. See Tamworth Regional Council case study below for one council that has effectively used this tool.

STRENGTHS

The major strength of this tool is that it takes the general ESD principles outlined in the NSW Local Government Act (1993) and assists staff in key operational areas of councils to identify potential impacts of their area of work.

As a free self-help guide it provides a good starting point for councils which don't have the dedicated sustainability staff or consultants to assist them in interpreting what ecological sustainability means in practice.

This guide is written in plain English and is accessible for an audience who are not familiar with (or sympathetic to) the language used by professionals in the sustainability field.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/ LIMITATIONS

The tool is designed to assist council staff in implementing ESD principles which are required as part of management planning in the Local Government Act (see above). Some aspects of the current version of the guidelines are out of date, however staff have advised that the SSROC plan to update the guidelines



and will include reference to the Department of Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements as well as including updated references.

COSTS AND TIME COMMITMENT

There are no direct costs to use of the guidelines. The tool is freely downloadable from SSROC's web-site, and is intended for independent use, without additional resourcing. At the very least, council staff would have to acquaint themselves with the tool, and adapt it to local circumstances, which could take a few weeks of dedicated time. Beyond that, the time required to put it into practice will depend upon the level of experience of staff and the depth and breadth of council operations slated for change, and the commitment of the organisation to change. The experience of Tamworth Regional Council has been that it is a straightforward and self-explanatory tool.

SUPPORT OFFERED

The tools have been designed as a stand-alone package for councils to use without extensive training or support, so no specific support is provided by SSROC. However, SSROC can be contacted on (02) 9330 6455 for further details of the tool, including the timeframe for the updated version.

WHERE TO FIND

The tool can be downloaded from the publications page of the SSROC website: <http://www.ssroc.nsw.gov.au/publications.aspx>



SSROC Sustainability Guidelines for Decision Makers, Volume 2

CASE STUDY: TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL

Context

Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) serves a population of 55,000 from Tamworth City and surrounding towns, and covers an area of 9,655km². It is a leading agricultural region known for its intensive animal production, boutique agricultural activities and a growing hobby farm market. Among other sustainability initiatives, TRC has produced the unique guide, *Community and Regional Equine Sustainability*.

In early 2009 the Council's Sustainability Action Team (the team) undertook a literature review of a wide range of tools that might assist their council measure progress towards sustainability. They wanted a tool that could assist departments within council to gain insight into how sustainable the council was, what attitudes to sustainability exist and what could be expanded upon. They didn't want a tool that just targeted senior management and decided that the SSROC model was most suited to their needs.

Approach

The first step taken by the team was to review and tailor the checklists to suit their own needs. Council was keen that the process had a real outdoor focus. The checklists were sent to all the operational areas of councils – including depots, roads and drainage, parks and pools. The team wanted to make it “really grass roots.”

The Senior Environmental Project Officer, who had oversight of the process, advised that as well as asking what could be done, they were asked about their dreams and wishes for their area of work if existing budgets were not a constraint.

Staff training wasn't felt to be necessary as the tool was self-explanatory consisting of a series of questions relating to specific areas of council operations/responsibilities. The findings from the whole process are now being used to tailor existing training to the needs of specific operational areas.



Learning and reflections

One of the major findings was that a lot of the outdoor staff were “already doing a fantastic job”, for example the depots were harvesting rainwater, but these innovations weren’t known by the rest of the organisation. The process also confirmed that most people were well informed about ecological sustainability and had lots of ideas they wanted to put in practice. The process also helped staff articulate some of their constraints, for example the limits of government purchasing arrangements to making sustainable purchasing decisions, and the added transportation costs when regional councils are required to use centralised purchasing.



Council’s experience of using the tool was that it was straightforward and self-explanatory, and didn’t require a lot of time to complete.

Outcomes for sustainability

Tamworth has not yet done a formal evaluation of the tool but Council’s experience is that using this tool has led to real results. A range of opportunities for sustainable actions were identified across the organisation. One example came from Fleet Management, where the Manager reorganised all the plant pools and made the equipment available on a loan and hire basis so that it was in use for most of the year. This reduced costs and environmental impacts.

Although scores weren’t used, baseline data about council operations was obtained through this process which will be valuable for future reviews and forward planning. An unexpected outcome of using this tool was that the great things that were already being done were broadcast to the rest of the organisation. This has been good for motivation and commitment of the operational staff to the process.



SSROC Sustainability Guidelines for Decision Makers, Volume 2

In conclusion council staff involved in using the guidelines had this to say: *'we think that this tool is a brilliant prompt for the beginning of any council's journey towards sustainability.'*

Council contact for further information

Senior Environmental Project Officer
Tamworth Regional Council
Contact number: (02) 6767 5816

CASE STUDY: SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

Sutherland Shire Council contributed to the development of the SSROC guidelines in 2000, in particular Volume One which was based on the ESD Index developed by Sutherland.

Council staff members who have reviewed the guidelines for inclusion in this review advise that they are still very relevant and useful to a Council looking to assess their sustainability performance. It was felt that only minimal work was required for these to be updated.

Council Contact for further information

Sustainability Educator/ Environmental Scientist
Sutherland Shire Council
Contact number: (02) 9710 0820



Sustainability Advantage

Summary

Sustainability Advantage is a business support service that includes a range of tools to assist medium to large sized organisations to better understand sustainability and to improve their environmental performance. Councils are encouraged to participate in Sustainability Advantage as a member in order to improve the sustainability of their own organisation, as distinct to promoting it to their own business community.

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainability Advantage program (the Program) is delivered by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW (DECCW) and was established in 2006. More than 330 medium to large organisations from business, public and not-for-profit sectors which collectively employ over 100,000 people in NSW, have joined Sustainability Advantage.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY ADVANTAGE?

DECCW helps Sustainability Advantage members to identify and implement projects that will lower costs (e.g. resources, energy), improve productivity and enhance reputation as a supplier and employer of choice. Support is also available to help reduce risk in environmental compliance and climate change.

To participate in the Program, organisations undertake five steps:

1. Make an initial commitment of 18 months participation
2. Complete the Sustainability Management Diagnostic

which helps senior managers identify and prioritise environmental actions that minimise risk and create business opportunities

3. Choose and undertake two or three of the seven Sustainability Advantage modules:

- > Vision, Commitment and Planning — develop a sustainability road map, including goals and plans to deliver them
- > Environmental Risk and Responsibility — undertake risk assessment, education and training to help ensure compliance with environmental legislation
- > Resource Efficiency — reduce waste and use less raw materials, energy and water to improve your bottom line
- > Supply Chain Management — work with key suppliers and customers to get the best environmental results from products and services
- > Staff Engagement — engage and train your staff to implement your sustainability plans
- > External Stakeholder Engagement — build stronger relationships with your community,



Sustainability Advantage

government, shareholders, suppliers and customers

- > Climate Change — identify risks and opportunities, and develop a greenhouse gas inventory

4. Attend meetings with other businesses in their industry or geographic area three to four times a year

5. Report progress and take part in evaluation

DECCW bring groups of businesses together in clusters that share regional or industry interests.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

Depending on the modules selected there are a range of intended outcomes:

- > Efficient use of resources
- > Reduced costs and improved productivity
- > Integration of environmental strategies with business planning
- > Improved customer, supplier and community relationships; and
- > Improved environmental performance and compliance with environmental legislation

By June 2009 organisations involved in the Program were saving over 13,000 tonnes of carbon pollution per annum from electricity and gas savings alone, as well as

17,100 tonnes of waste. Financial savings across all areas are at least \$7.5million per year.

USE BY COUNCILS

Councils who have taken up the Program as members include Marrickville Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Lismore City Council, Parramatta City Council, Sutherland Shire Council, Great Lakes Council, Greater Taree City Council and Willoughby City Council.

STRENGTHS

The Sustainability Advantage Program and its associated tools and resources, including the Sustainability Management Diagnostic, is comprehensive and supported by sustainability consultants. The Resource Efficiency, Supply Chain Management, Staff Engagement and External Stakeholder Engagement modules are seen as particularly beneficial to councils.

Being a member of this Program provides a valuable opportunity for councils to turn into action the commitments they have made in their organisational sustainability plans. Councils already have a regulatory role in relationship with business and many are running educational programs, so membership of Sustainability



Advantage also helps them lead by example.

The Program provides funding to councils interested in acting as a facilitator between DECCW and their business community, which in turn can provide a resource for councils' own business support programs.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS / LIMITATIONS

Best results are achieved when there is a person who champions the Program, gains the involvement of relevant operational areas and builds a team approach. Active follow-up by the Program consultant is also important. A few NSW councils have developed tools of their own with a focus on energy and water savings. However, there are many advantages of being part of this NSW-wide Program that is comprehensive, well supported and has increasing brand recognition in the private sector.

COSTS AND TIME COMMITMENT

There is a one-off cost of up to \$3,000 (plus GST) to join the Program depending on the size of the organisation. However, the total value of involvement is much greater than this initial

cost. Organisations involved in the program receive technical support from DECCW's sustainability experts worth thousands of dollars and achieve significant dollar savings.

Councils must commit to an initial participation period of 18 months which needs to be endorsed by the General Manager or a senior executive member.

SUPPORT OFFERED

The Program offers practical and tailored support in the form of workshops and training, technical assistance and networking which will help councils and businesses plan and implement environmental projects easily. Participants also get an opportunity to involve their staff in environmental improvement projects and support them with sustainability education and training.

WHERE TO FIND

Call: Business Partnerships at DECCW on (02) 8837 6000

Email: sustainbus@environment.nsw.gov.au

Visit: environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus/sustainabilityadvantage.htm



Sustainability Advantage

CASE STUDY: LAKE MACQUARIE CITY COUNCIL

Lake Macquarie City has a population of approximately 200,000 people and over 11,000 businesses. Leading industries include retail, manufacturing, health and community services. The Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) has a strong commitment to sustainability employing a dedicated sustainability team who work on wide ranging programs related to sustainability.

LMCC signed up for Sustainability Advantage in January 2009. The council chose the Program as they thought it would provide a cost effective way to get expert advice on reducing the ecological footprint of Council operations. They were also keen to “mainstream” sustainability across the organisation.

Approach

The inception meeting involved DECCW staff, LMCC Sustainability staff and Executive in order to establish a baseline and identify where improvements to performance were needed. It cost Council \$3,000 to join the Sustainability Advantage program.

The Project Officer for LMCC's own *Walk the Talk* program, which is aimed at reducing Council's ecological footprint, was given responsibility for managing LMCC's involvement in the program along with other staff who participated in data gathering and module workshops. A consultant, paid for by DECCW, was then selected to assist council staff implement the modules. LMCC is currently working through their first module, 'Resource Efficiency'. The working group set up to develop that module is focusing on the LMCC depot, and is assessing operational areas such as fleet management, procurement, civil works, waste and environment.

LMCC is promoting this and other State Government programs including rebates, which are designed to assist residents and businesses. LMCC is now looking to set up a local cluster of businesses in Sustainability Advantage program.



Learning and reflections

The initial diagnostic provided a broad indication of LMCC's progress towards sustainability across the whole organisation. It was useful to have the Executive involved in this forum because it summarised Council's achievements to date and set out opportunities for improvement.

Although LMCC is still at early stages of the program, it has been very useful in facilitating brainstorming with staff from across the organisation. Sustainability Advantage supports the *Walk the Talk* program and complements the ongoing LMCC service review. It is providing a consistent way to collect baseline data, develop actions and quantify improvements. The main lesson learnt is that there are always areas for improving business and sustainability performance, and that it is vital to include people from a wide range of service areas in the process.

Outcomes for sustainability

It is too early in the process to be able to provide results as the group is currently developing actions and assigning responsibilities based on areas identified for improvement. However LMCC looks forward to sharing the outcomes of the program more widely in the future.

For other councils who are thinking of joining the Program, Lake Macquarie staff have this advice:

'Select a consultant according to the type of organisation you work for. Choose one with plenty of experience across a range of similar organisations. Provide a thorough review of where your own organisation is at with regard to sustainability initiatives and data collection so that the tools add value from the start.'

Council contact for further information

Team Leader Environmental Risk
Lake Macquarie City Council
Contact number: (02) 4921 0624



Sustainability Advantage

CASE STUDY: GREATER TAREE CITY COUNCIL

Greater Taree Council joined the Sustainability Advantage Program in early 2009 and has undertaken two modules to date: Environmental Risk and Responsibility and Resource Efficiency.

Before joining the Program, Council already had a number of initiatives in place to improve their organisation's environmental performance, for example energy and water monitoring which helped Council identify the facilities with the biggest energy and water use. The Sustainability Advantage Program has added value to the existing initiatives through focusing on actions to improve efficiency and reduce costs. For example, information on the potential cost savings from the Manning Aquatic Leisure Centre and other facilities was provided to Senior Management and directly assisted in obtaining seed funding for related projects. The data collected through the program is also assisting in putting a business case for external funding for projects.

Membership of Sustainability Advantage has resulted in a wider number of staff getting involved, and in greater motivation by staff. Council acknowledges the skill of the consultants provided by DECCW as a major factor in what they have been able to achieve. Results from the first 6 months of involvement are now being collated and Council looks forward to commencing work on the Staff Engagement module.

Council contact for further information

Environmental Sustainability Team Coordinator
Greater Taree City Council
Contact: (02) 6592 5387



Sustainable Choice

Summary

Sustainable Choice is a free sustainable procurement program for NSW councils. It supports councils in making sustainable purchasing decisions and in integrating sustainable purchasing into existing policies and practices. A sustainable procurement program can apply to many different sections of council and offers tangible ways to improve a council's environmental sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Choice is hosted by the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW (LGSA NSW) and is a joint program of LGSA NSW and Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW). The program formed in late 2006 as an evolution of the Local Government Buy Recycled Alliance (LGBRA), expanding the program coverage beyond the previous emphasis on recycled products.

WHAT IS THE SUSTAINABLE CHOICE PROGRAM?

Sustainable Choice is a free sustainable procurement program for NSW councils. It provides tools and resources to help council staff increase the overall level of sustainable procurement within their council. Sustainable products and services are those that contain recycled content, are reused or recycled at end of life, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save water and/or energy, are non toxic, help protect biodiversity and habitat, are made or recycled locally, minimise unnecessary

purchasing and provide long-term value for money.

The program aims to build sustainable purchasing capacity within the Local Government sector through staff peer education and information sharing. This is supported through workshops, seminars and sustainable product expos for program members. Information on specific products and services is available via fact sheets, briefing notes and case studies showcase successful purchasing initiatives at other councils. A free web-based database of sustainable products is available to help council staff locate sustainable products and services. This database is also accessible to non-members.

Joining the program requires endorsement by elected representatives. To support councils in adopting the program, a range of template documents are provided; including drafts of a council resolution to join the program, a sustainable purchasing policy, a briefing paper on the program, guidelines for establishing a cross-council team and a sustainable shopping list illustrating the types of purchases where sustainable options are



Sustainable Choice

available. The template documents, training, guidance material and database of sustainable products have been specifically designed for NSW councils.

For member councils the program also offers Sustainable Procurement Training for council staff. The training is available as a half-day course (morning or afternoon) and is delivered by Sustainable Choice staff at your council. The training can include an introduction for staff to councils ESD obligations and the trend towards triple bottom line sustainability and demonstrate how purchasing fits in with these ideas.

- > Awareness of sustainable product choices available in a range of areas.

Areas covered by Sustainable choice include building and construction; office equipment and consumables; office furniture; stationary; paper; publications and printed material; parks and gardens equipment; garden organics; road and footpath construction materials; traffic management materials; fleet management items; waste management items; cleaning products; water saving devices and lighting products.

USE BY COUNCILS

Currently, approximately one third of NSW councils are members. A broad cross section of councils from rural through to metropolitan councils and both larger and smaller councils are involved in the program. City of Sydney, Sutherland, Penrith, Kempsey, Clarence Valley, Dubbo, Nambucca, Cowra and Wagga Wagga are all members of the program. A full list of member councils is provided on the Sustainable Choice website.



INTENDED OUTCOMES

- > Increased levels of sustainable procurement
- > Increased integration of sustainable procurement into councils' existing policies and systems; and



STRENGTHS

Sustainable purchasing is a tangible way of improving the environmental sustainability of a council. As purchasing decisions are made in many areas of council, the program encourages the establishment of a cross-council team including the Procurement Manager, Head of Engineering, the Environment Manager, Finance Manager and Supply Manager. Where such a team is not already established, creating it may provide a useful base to engage these staff with other sustainability issues in the longer term.

As advised by the Sustainable Choice Program Manager, a purchasing program can also help to re-ignite momentum on sustainability because it can be implemented quickly and the small initial milestones can be used to build confidence and momentum for the program. Broad uptake of the Sustainable Choice program amongst NSW councils helps to build the business case within a council that sustainable procurement is the minimum they should be doing.

For councils with a lot of experience in sustainable purchasing, the appearance of new technologies and innovations in the market means there are always new opportunities for councils to improve in this area. The Sustainable Choice product database reduces the research required for an individual council to keep on top of new products and technologies.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/ LIMITATIONS

Councils that have integrated sustainability deeply into their council operations may find that it is better for sustainable purchasing to be part of their overall sustainability work rather than focus on it as a separate program. However, in this case the Sustainable Choice product database would still be a valuable reference and sufficient reason to join the program.



Sustainable Choice

COST AND TIME COMMITMENT

Membership of the program is free but requires a council resolution affirming council's support for sustainable purchasing and committing council to participate in the Sustainable Choice program.

The program also provides a partial subsidy for the Sustainable Procurement Training course. To have Sustainable Choice run a half day Sustainable Procurement Training Course at a council costs member councils \$300. This would be for 8 to 15 participants with the venue and catering to be provided by the Council.

Resource requirements are generally determined by the level of activity that the council wishes to devote to sustainable procurement. The only firm commitment of membership is completing an annual survey evaluating the tools and reporting on the scale and scope of sustainable purchasing at your council. The survey, at a bare

minimum, takes approximately two hours per year. However, to enthusiastically pursue the broader issue of sustainable procurement across the council is a more significant commitment.

SUPPORT OFFERED

The Project Manager is available full time via phone or email to provide support and advice. The Sustainable Choice Program provides support tailored to the specific needs of member councils.

WHERE TO FIND

To find out more about Sustainable Choice for your council:

Call: Sustainable Choice Project Manager on (02) 9242 4000

Visit: www.lgsa-plus.net.au/sustainablechoice



CASE STUDY: KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL

Context

The Kempsey Shire is located in the Mid North Coast of NSW and features the Macleay Valley Coast and the Macleay River. The Shire has a population of over 28,000 and is known for its natural beauty and relaxed lifestyle.

Kempsey Shire Council joined the Sustainable Choice Program in May 2007. One of their main reasons for joining was to assist Council in meeting its ESD obligations under the Local Government Act 1993 and to help address some of the triple bottom line outcomes outlined in the Kempsey Shire ESD Strategy which was being finalised at that time. The ESD Strategy has been a very effective strategic planning document, setting the pathway for sustainability in the Shire. On top of this foundation, the Sustainable Choice Program has provided a hands-on, practical example of how Council officers can help make the organisation more sustainable. It has provided a tangible link between some of the actions proposed in the ESD Strategy and what staff see happening within Council.

Approach

Purchasing staff at Kempsey found the online database quite useful to get information on specific products and a list of useful suppliers. The templates and guidance material assisted the Sustainable Choice Implementation Team to draft internal policies or staff education material on certain products. Council is interested in participating in the training courses but has not yet done so.



Sustainable Choice

Outcomes for sustainability

The Sustainable Choice Program has enabled Council to look more closely at its purchasing policies and integrate sustainable procurement principles into everyday operations. One of the first outcomes was to set up an internal working group to help drive the process within Council. To this end, Council set up the Sustainable Choice Implementation Team. The aim of this team is to make sustainable purchasing and practices an everyday activity integrated into Council's existing processes and systems. Council staff on the team are from procurement management, waste services & recycling, fleet management and sustainable development.

Achievements of the program so far include:

- > a trial run of 'Canefields' copy paper made from sugar cane waste and a subsequent trial run of paper with recycled content
- > introduction of old light bulb collection service for civic centre & depot
- > introduction of an optional alternative diary type, made from 100% recycled materials and including environmental friendly living tips, in the corporate diary order; and
- > energy monitoring and benchmarking of a number Council's larger electricity user sites, the vehicle fleet and the waste services section

Process outcomes included a review of Council's existing Purchasing Policy and subsequent inclusion of sustainable procurement principles. The team has also started drafting a sustainable procurement template for tenders and EOs. The team ran a staff competition to develop a sustainability slogan and logo to be used on all future staff education materials. The program has resulted in increased staff awareness and knowledge of sustainable procurement principles.



Learning and reflections

Kempsey Shire Council found the Sustainable Choice Program to be a useful tool to assist in bringing sustainable procurement into the operations of Council. It has benefited Council through:

- > opening avenues to new suppliers of sustainable products and services
- > assisting with the review of purchasing policies, and
- > demonstrating on-ground actions towards moving the organisation towards sustainability.

Staff found that it had been very useful at times to have access to the Sustainable Choice project manager to bounce ideas off and ask questions about certain products. Council found that setting up the Sustainable Choice Implementation Team really helped to get things rolling on sustainable procurement. Overall, Kempsey Shire Council found that the Sustainable Choice Program provided a good starting point for delivering on-ground sustainable procurement actions within the organisation. Council recommends the Program as a good resource for councils at the starting point of implementing sustainability actions within their operations.

Council contact for further information

Ecologically Sustainable Development Officer
Kempsey Shire Council
Contact number: (02) 6566 3200



Sustainable Choice

CASE STUDY: HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL

Hornsby Shire Council joined the Sustainable Choice Program in 2008. Like many councils, Hornsby has a decentralised procurement process where staff often request their own items. This means that, despite strong support for sustainable purchasing in the procurement team, sustainable procurement is dependent on influencing the purchasing habits of individual staff members. Joining the Sustainable Choice Program was a way to support the procurement section in influencing staff to make sustainable purchasing decisions.

At Hornsby, procurement staff have used the Sustainable Choice Program's resources to help raise the profile of sustainable product choices. For example, in 2009 the sustainable procurement committee hosted a sustainable products open day where several suppliers had stands showing samples of their products. The displays were accompanied by a presentation re-affirming Council's commitment to sustainable procurement. The Council also promotes the Sustainable Choice product database on its intranet site to make it easier for staff to find out about sustainable products and services. In addition to using the Sustainable Choice resources, Council staff found having access to the Sustainable Choice Program Co-ordinator for support and encouragement was a valuable reason to participate in the program.

Council contact for further information

Manager Procurement
Hornsby Shire Council
Contact number: (02) 9847 6642



Other Resources

RELATED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

During the consultation undertaken with councils to develop the Tool Selector, a range of other tools and resources were suggested as relevant to the topics of this Guide, useful to their council and publicly available. Summary information has been provided for the following tools and resources.

Community Indicators Victoria

Developed by: Victorian Government agencies and partners and hosted by the University of Melbourne.

Description: The Community Indicators Victoria framework is based on a set of approximately 80 community wellbeing indicators, covering the broad spectrum of local community life. The indicators are grouped under five major domains: Healthy, safe and inclusive communities; Dynamic, resilient local economies; Sustainable built and natural environments; Culturally rich and vibrant communities; and Democratic and engaged communities. This set of indicators is intended as a starting point for Local Governments and local communities so that they can identify the issues and indicators which are most important to them.

Resources/link: www.communityindicators.net.au

Compass Index of Sustainability (AtKisson Group)

Developed by: **AtKisson Group**

Description: The Compass Index of Sustainability is a method for clustering, aggregating and scaling indicators and evaluation results on an absolute 0-100 performance scale. It is a package of tools, requiring payment. The author, Alan AtKisson, was involved in the Sustainable Seattle project. Randwick City Council has trialled the use of this tool.

Resources/link: www.AtKisson.com



Other Resources

Compendium of Sustainable Development Indicator Initiatives

Developed by: International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Description: The compendium is a worldwide directory of who is doing what in the field of sustainability indicators with a strong research focus. It's strength is academic research, rather than practical tools for organisations.

Resources/link: www.iisd.org/measure/compendium

Ecological Footprint Calculator

Developed by: EPA Victoria

Description: This is a tool for measuring household impact on the natural world and is represented as an area. Used in an evaluation context *The Ecological Footprint* calculator can be used as an indicator to track the overall sustainability of the community or impact of household education programs.

Resources/link: <http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/default.asp>

Ecologically Sustainable Development Information Guide for Local Councils (2002)

Developed by: LGSA

Description: This guide was developed to assist New South Wales councils in the implementation of ESD. It is designed to assist councils to understand the concept of ESD through outlining: the legislative responsibilities of councils; how to get the process within councils right; and developing ESD programs. Individual case studies are provided to highlight the activities of a number of leading NSW councils.

Resources/link: http://www.lgsa.org.au/resources/documents/esd_information_guide_v1.7_020506.pdf



Ecospecifier

Developed by: Ecospecifier Australasia

Description: Ecospecifier contains a knowledge base of over 3500 eco-products, eco-materials, technologies and resources. It claims to be the leading global source of sustainable development and life-cycle assessed green product information.

Resources/link: www.ecospecifier.org

Environmental Sustainability Action Planning Framework and Guidelines (in development)

Developed by: Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW

Description: The Environmental Sustainability Action Planning Framework and Guidelines will be made available in 2010. The target audience for this tool is local council officers/teams responsible for environmental action planning. The tool is proposed to include three related elements: an Environmental Sustainability Action Planning Guide; an Action Plan template; and a related Programming Tool. Each of these will be user friendly, flexible and suited for use by Councils anywhere along the spectrum of their journey towards environmental sustainability.

Resources/link: Will be available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au
Please contact Sustainability Programs Division on (02) 8837 6000 or sustainability@environment.nsw.gov.au for more information.

How Green is my Council? (WA)

Developed by: Perth Environment House and ECU students

Description: This website reports on the sustainability work of Perth councils, based on a survey questionnaire. A comparison chart gives an overview of what actions different councils are taking towards sustainability. Councils are also profiled individually to provide more background on their sustainability work.

Resources/link: <http://www.howgreen.net.au/>



Other Resources

Public Participation Spectrum

Developed by: International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

Description: The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is a non-profit organisation established to advance the practice of public participation world wide. On their website are a limited number of publicly available resources and wider range of resources and information for IAP2 members. Of particular note are the Core Values of Public Participation and the Public Participation Spectrum. The Public Participation Spectrum outlines five levels of public participation in decision making – inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower. These resources are designed to assist organisations, decision makers, policy makers and practitioners to improve the quality of their community engagement work.

Resources/link: www.iap2.org.au/sitebuilder/resources/knowledge/asset/files/36/iap2spectrum.pdf

Risk Management Standards: As/NZ 4360:2004

Developed by: International Organisation for Standardization (ISO)

Description: This Standard provides a generic guide for managing risk. This Standard may be applied to a wide range of activities, decisions or operations of any public, private or community enterprise, group or individual. While the Standard has very broad applicability, risk management processes are commonly applied by organisations or groups and so, for convenience, the term 'organisation' has been used throughout this Standard.

Resources/link: There is a range of local distributors for this standard and associated documents.



Sustainable Urban Water Council Classification System

Developed by: Dr Rebekah Brown, Monash University for the Water Sensitive Urban Design Program

Description: The system is based on five phases of councils organisational development, based on their sustainable urban water management organisational capacity, operational qualities and associated skill level. The five phases from 'project' through to 'integrated' have been developed out of research into urban water management practices, involving fourteen in-depth case studies of Local Government organisations across Metropolitan Sydney. The USSA have adapted the methodology for use as a training resource for councils and applied it more generally in assessing an organisations progress toward sustainability.

Resources/link: Contact USSA Learning Officer, 02 9242 4000

A research paper explaining this system can be found at: www.urbanwatergovernance.com/pdf/conference-brown-04.pdf and www.lgsa.org.au/ussa

USSA Resource database

Developed by: Urban Sustainability Support Alliance

Description: The USSA Resource Database includes over 70 resources aimed to support NSW councils to become more sustainable. Resources cover diverse topics from business education to food fairness, NRM to project management. This database provides a centralised location for the promotion and dissemination of sustainability resources developed for and by NSW councils.

Resources/link: www.lgsa.org.au/ussa



Other Resources

OTHER TOOL KITS OR GUIDES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

During the consultation process, suggestions were made in relation to topics not included in the brief for this work — including the topics of community engagement, partnerships and training. Toolkits and guides that were recommended to the report authors, and are currently in use within the NSW Local Government sector, or soon to be released, are listed below.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement Tool Kit: Policy and Procedure

Developed by: Liverpool City Council

Description: The Community Engagement Toolkit outlines the policies and procedures set out by Liverpool City Council for their community engagement processes. Specifically it details 10 key principles and seven steps to undertake community engagement. The steps include understanding the project; identifying the primary engagement type; identifying the level of impact the project has on the community; selecting strategies to implement; utilising resources outlined; developing a communications strategy; and providing feedback to the community. The toolkit incorporates simple to understand matrices and tables, to outline the key strategies and concepts involved.

Resources/link: www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/haveyoursay/communityengagementtoolkit.htm



Effective Engagement – the engagement toolkit: building relationships with community and other stakeholders

Developed by: Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria with the Coastal Co-operative Research Centre (CRC)

Description: The engagement toolkit provides a list of 68 tools for assisting in the planning, implementation and evaluation of community engagement activities. For each tool a description is provided as well as its objective, outcomes, resources required, potential uses, strengths, weaknesses and organisational requirements. A tool checklist and selection criteria is also given to facilitate critical reflection and appropriate use of the tools outlined.

Resources/link: [www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/5BEE8070970CF42ACA257085001FEF94/\\$File/Book+3+-+The+Engagement+Toolkit.pdf](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/5BEE8070970CF42ACA257085001FEF94/$File/Book+3+-+The+Engagement+Toolkit.pdf)

Towards the Whole of Community Engagement: A Practical Toolkit

Developed by: Brown and Aslin for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Bureau of Rural Sciences and the Murray Darling Basin Commission

Description: This toolkit goes into detail the elements which make for good community engagement, including discussion on who should be involved, knowledge systems, engagement processes and values that underpin the practice of community engagement. It also helps practitioners to identify and choose which tools and techniques should be used for community engagement, by identifying twelve categories of tools. Finally, it identifies where more resources can be found by providing a comprehensive resource list covering 92 publications dealing with community engagement tools and related topics.

Resources/link: http://publication.mdbc.gov.au/download/towards_whole_of_community_engagement_toolkit.pdf



Other Resources

LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The Sustainability Learning Hub

Developed by: DECCW

Description: The Education for Sustainability (EfS) Professional Learning Hub is a website resource currently in development. The aim of the website is to support ongoing demand-based professional learning for sustainability practitioners using education to create change. Specifically The Hub is designed to assist practitioners to identify their priority professional learning needs and highlight relevant providers of professional learning services. It will be valuable resource for the ongoing training and development needs of council sustainability professionals.

Resources/link: www.efslearninghub.net.au/

GOVERNANCE

Governance Health Check

Developed by: Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA) and the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)

Description: The Governance Health Check (GHC) is a self audit guide for good governance in Local Government, targeted at NSW Councils. It is designed to help individual councils identify specific governance issues that need attention and provide a basis for measuring progress and improvement over time. It includes practical tools such as an evaluation form, health check worksheet and action planning worksheet. Additionally, there are sections which discuss the ethics and values of good governance, risk management and internal control issues and processes, decision making processes and monitoring and review tools.

Resources/link: [www.icac.nsw.gov.au/files/pdf/Governance_Health_Check_Manual_\(22-11-04\).pdf](http://www.icac.nsw.gov.au/files/pdf/Governance_Health_Check_Manual_(22-11-04).pdf)



MULTI-CRITERIA ANALYSIS

Multi-criteria analysis: A manual

Developed by: Communities and Local Government, UK

Description: The Multi-criteria analysis (MCA) manual is a comprehensive guide to applying MCA processes at a council level to create well informed decisions. MCA is a technique for evaluating a set of alternative options against multiple, and often conflicting criteria. The MCA manual provides an appraisal and evaluation of government decision making processes, as well as a detailed overview MCA techniques and specific processes. Case studies are also provided to illustrate the application of MCA.

Resources/link: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/multicriteriaanalysismanual

Sydney Beaches Valuation Project Summary

Developed by: UNSW and Sydney Coastal Councils

Description: The Sydney Coastal Councils Group website includes a number of examples of projects that have successfully employed MCA. The Sydney Beaches Valuation Project Summary outlines the steps undertaken to complete a multi-criteria analysis. The use of MCA assisted local and state governments to make more informed decisions on protecting coastal property, infrastructure and beach environments in the face of climate change impacts. This resource is a valuable case study of how and when MCA can be useful to councils.

Resources/link: www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/documents/SYDNEYBEACHESVALUATIONPROJECT-2009updated.pdf



Appendix

DEFINITIONS – SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable Development

The USSA have developed a standard glossary of terms* which includes the following international definition of sustainable development.

Sustainable development was defined by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development – the Brundtland Commission – in 1987 as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Dimensions of sustainability

Sustainability stems from the phrase 'sustainable development', but has evolved to refer to the broader interplay of social, environmental and economic factors. The USSA Glossary provides additional specific definitions for ecologically sustainable development, and economic and social sustainability.

* Link to USSA website: www.lgsa.org.au/ussa





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Local Government
Association of NSW



Shires Association
of NSW

Department of Environment & Climate Change NSW



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