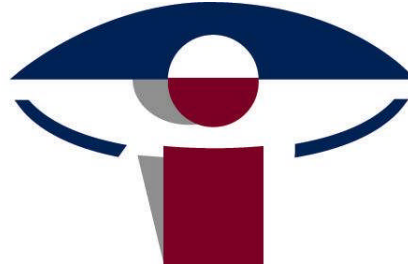


Victorian TAFE
Association



Victorian TAFE Association

response to the draft National VET Sector Sustainability Policy
and Action Plan (2009-2012)

6 March 2009

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Executive summary

VTA fully supports the need to have a national approach to developing the sustainability agenda for vocational and technical education.

The VET sector needs to respond to economic, societal and environmental issues to ensure we remain relevant to workforce needs and that we are at the forefront of developing programs to cater for new demand to help Australia achieve greater participation and productivity.

In this document, VTA's review provides comments ranging from conceptual issues through to language. All comments and feedback are designed to be constructive at all stages.

The feedback focuses on the need for a clear and broad definition of sustainability, the need for clarity in the policy and other recommended documents and the importance of integrating sustainability into core business operations. Further, VTA strongly supports the need for further governance and professional development in sustainability for people working in the VET sector.

Finally, a flexible approach and further consultation with TAFE organisations will be key to the success of this program.

The following list provides a summary of all the recommendations contained in our response. The background and rationale for these are provided in detail in each section of the document.

Recommendations

Language and terminology

1. Use the term "sustainable economy".
2. Clarify the meaning of the term "green skills" to ensure it applies to all learners and workers.
3. Simplify the language throughout the document.
4. Use one concept per sentence.
5. Test the readability and understanding of the document with people who are not familiar with the VET sector style but are existing or potential stakeholders in the process.
6. Provide a glossary of terms eg workforce development, green skills, sustainable economy, stakeholders etc.

Structure

7. Create separate documents.
8. Restructure the policy.
9. Revise the structure of the strategy and action plan.

Policy

10. Provide a short but clear context for the policy.

11. Provide further context in the background paper.
12. Define sustainability and how it is being used in the document.
13. Be clear about the scope of the policy – does it intend to be a climate change/carbon-focused policy, an environmental sustainability policy or a general sustainability policy? VTA recommends starting with a general sustainability policy
14. Use a broad description of sustainability to ensure it encompasses social and economic issues as well as environmental outcomes.
15. Adopt a clear vision and mission statement.
16. Reduce the size of the policy to two pages.

Indicators

17. Establish performance indicators and progress measures based on the outcome desired for the policy and action plan.
18. Include relevant economic, environmental and social indicators.
19. Include procurement and supply chain indicators.
20. Consult with VTA and other VET sector organisations before establishing indicators and measures.
21. Establish a realistic implementation timeframe with consideration of capacity and existing frameworks.

Stakeholders

22. Provide more information about VET sector stakeholders in the background paper and the role they play or potentially play as stakeholders.
23. Define the term stakeholder in the policy.
24. Include employing organisations as stakeholders.
25. Separate learners from the community at large.

Winning hearts and minds

26. Ensure resources are allocated to providing training and development opportunities for people working (at all levels) in the VET sector to develop their engagement in and understanding of sustainability issues.
27. Develop a flexible and consultative approach that will cater for individual needs of organizations.
28. Encourage actions that integrate into core operations.

Action plan

29. Develop clear strategies that support the principles in the policy.
30. Develop clear actions that support the strategies.
31. Ensure strategies and actions cover breadth of sustainability issues.

32. Establish flexible approach that allows for differing depth and breadth of sustainability skilling.

1. Introduction

The Victorian TAFE Association (VTA) commends the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) and the National VET Sector Sustainability Action Group for the development of the draft Sustainability Policy and Action Plan for the VET sector.

VTA fully supports the need to have a national approach to developing the sustainability agenda for vocational and technical education.

VTA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on this important document and is pleased to provide comments ranging from conceptual issues through to language. Our comments and feedback are extensive and whilst forthright in some instances, are designed to be constructive at all stages.

2. General comments

The proposed policy and action plan is comprehensive and covers a wide range of issues. It recognises the important role our industry can play in skilling our workforce for a future that will be different to the one we currently know.

In VTA's experience, the consistent advice from industry leaders is that sustainability must be part of the core business model and linked to the financial indicators of the organisation. Similarly with the vocational and technical education sector, sustainability should not be an "add on", "nice to have" or be done because it is the "right thing to do". To be successfully developed and integrated, it must have strong links to the financial outcomes and growth of our industry.

2.1 Drivers for change

So, why would the VET sector look at a sustainable business model? What are the drivers for change?

In VTA's view, the drivers for change include

- New government regulation (for example, the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme) which will create demand for new skills and jobs
- Government initiatives such as COAG's Participation and Productivity Agenda which will impact the development and delivery of training
- The changing nature of the workforce in terms of age, gender and other demographic data which will impact enrolments and modes of learning

- The impact of technology on learning and learning delivery
- Competitive and financial pressure to run operations more efficiently to achieve positive financial and environmental outcomes

It is essential that the VET sector respond to these drivers to ensure we remain relevant to workforce needs, that we are at the forefront of developing programs to cater for new demand to help Australia achieve greater participation and productivity.

3. Language and terminology

The terms “green” and “eco” have in the past been associated with fringe elements that may not support the concept of growth. Whilst this situation has improved in recent years, VTA recommends avoiding any terms that could have negative connotations with parts of its stakeholder group.

VTA suggests avoiding using the word “green economy”. The implication is that it is separate to the real economy. What we really should be developing is a “sustainable economy” – ie the economy can be strong whilst being environmentally responsible and socially productive. This term brings in the notion that *people* as well as *lower carbon* are essential to having an economy that is strong and durable.

The term “green skills” is increasingly widely used in the VET sector. However, it must not be too narrow in its scope or presume that only certain jobs require these skills. In fact to truly achieve change, all workers will need to understand and embed sustainability principles and apply them in their roles. The level of this will differ according to the specific industry and type of role.

VTA understands that the policy and action plan will be read and used by a range of stakeholders, many of whom may not be familiar with the terminology and industry-specific issues that are referred to in the policy. To assist with engagement of the policy, it is important that the language, terminology and concepts are accessible to a wide range of users. Overall, the style of the document is difficult to follow. Multiple concepts are often contained in single, lengthy sentences which make it difficult to easily get a clear sense of the key issues being discussed.

Recommendations

1. Use the term “sustainable economy”
2. Clarify the meaning of the term “green skills” to ensure it applies to all learners and workers
3. Simplify the language throughout the document

4. Use one concept per sentence
5. Test the readability and understanding of the document with people who are not familiar with the VET sector style but are existing or potential stakeholders in the process
6. Provide a glossary of terms eg workforce development, green skills, sustainable economy, stakeholders etc

4. Structure

The policy and action plan will benefit from a clearer structure. VTA strongly recommends the separation of the policy and action plan into separate documents to enable this clarity. All strategies in the action plan should refer back to a specific principle in the policy. Further, the readability of the document will improve with a separate paper for background information, a revised numbering system and page numbers.

Recommendations

7. Create separate documents
 - a. Background or discussion paper (this provides the rationale for the policy and action plan)
 - b. Sustainability policy
 - c. Sustainability strategy and action plan
8. Restructure the policy into the following sections
 - d. Section 1 – Introduction
 - e. Section 2 – Definitions
 - f. Section 3 – Purpose
 - g. Section 4 – Scope
 - h. Section 5 – Stakeholders
 - i. Section 6 – Principles (or policy statement)
 - j. Section 7 – Implementation

k. Section 8 – Accountabilities (or Responsibilities)

l. Section 9 – Other legislation, frameworks etc

9. Revise the structure of the strategy and action plan

Refer to Appendix 1 for an example of a sustainability action plan.

VTA also recommends the working group reviews the excellent template plan developed by Sustainability Victoria's Resource Smart program. This plan is well structured, clear and practical. It recognises that not everything can be done at once and also provides many ideas for indicators (on environmental issues). The template is attached as a separate document.

5. Policy

5.1 Set the context

The policy will benefit from additional context to help readers understand the issues and their relevance to sustainability. Including basic data in the background paper will assist - for example, who comprises the VET sector, who are the learners, how many programs are delivered annually, what are the main areas of learning and characteristics of learners, what are the characteristics of people employed in the sector.

As it stands, the introduction section starts with a technical discussion on carbon issues which could discourage readers from continuing due to both the difficult language and lack of context.

Recommendations

10. Provide a short but clear context for the policy

11. Provide further context in the background paper

5.2 Sustainability, environmental or climate change focus?

Sustainability refers to social, economic *and* environmental considerations. All these dimensions need to be balanced and addressed for the economy, society and organisations to successfully survive and prosper in the future.

In addition to environmental issues such as carbon emissions, sustainability is about population trends, ageing population, social inclusion, labour availability and a whole range of other issues

which will affect the future of the VET sector. There is an opportunity to recognise these issues, along with climate change. Social issues are underrepresented in the policy and action plan.

A common definition of sustainability is taken from the Brundtland Report *Our Common Future* (1987)

“...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

This definition is solid in a general sense but not specific enough for the purposes of the national VET sector. A more specific description which is more relevant to the role of the VET sector refers to sustainability being a way of operating that recognises that the overall health of the economy relies on the long-term availability of natural resources, a healthy environment, a productive workforce and cohesive societies.

From here, all comments and feedback in this feedback document are based on this description unless noted.

Recommendations

12. Define sustainability and how it is being used in the document
13. Be clear about the scope of the policy – does it intend to be a climate change/carbon-focused policy, an environmental sustainability policy or a general sustainability policy? VTA recommends starting with a general sustainability policy
14. Use a broad description of sustainability to ensure it encompasses social and economic issues as well as environmental outcomes

5.3 Provide a vision and mission

In addition to the comments in the previous section, VTA would like to see a clear vision and mission for the policy and action plan. The vision is the aspirational goal and the mission is the actionable statement. This will assist users to gain a clear and unifying understanding of the purpose of the policy.

An example of a vision and mission and provided below.

Vision

Every person coming out of the VET sector will integrate sustainability skills in their workplace and communities.

Mission

Sustainability will be embedded in all VET programs so all learners can develop their sustainability understanding and skills.

See the revised diagram in Appendix 2 for how these would fit with the existing structure.

Recommendations

15. Adopt a clear vision and mission statement

5.4 The shorter, the clearer

VTA undertook an extensive review of sustainability policies as part of its research into developing its own model sustainability policy for the Victorian TAFE sector in 2007 and early 2008. The outcomes of this research showed that shorter policies (approximately two pages) were the easiest to understand and more clearly articulated their purpose than lengthy ones. We have provided samples of these and some others.

| Appendix | Policy example | Reasons for including as an example |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Appendix 3 | Victorian TAFE Association Model Sustainability Policy | Clarity, clear commitments, general sustainability policy, relevance to the VET industry |
| Appendix 4 | VicSuper Sustainability Policy | Clear purpose, scope and relevance to the industry in which it operates General sustainability policy |
| Appendix 5 | Monash University Environmental Sustainability Policy | Length, clarity and clear purpose |
| Appendix 6 | Westpac Environmental Policy | Length, clarity and clear purpose |

Recommendations

16. Reduce the size of the policy to two pages

6. Indicators

A set of performance indicators is generally needed before progress measures can be developed. Indicators are important as they set the foundation for measuring progress.

We refer you to the Global Reporting Initiative(GRI) – www.globalreporting.org This program is the internationally preferred reporting standard that more organisations in Australia and globally use to report their sustainability performance. It provides indicators across economic, social and environmental dimensions. The [reference sheet](#) will give you a good snapshot of the GRI indicators used by reporting organisations.

Given the diverse nature of the industry and the large number of operators, we recommend further consultation with organisations such as ours to agree on a set of relevant, core indicators. There will need to be a transition phase and assistance provided to ensure organisations are able to report appropriately and without any significant administrative impost or increase in resources required.

Key issues for indicators include

- a) establishing what to measure
- b) having the capacity to capture data
- c) establishing systems and processes to undertake measurement within existing frameworks
- d) having enough lead time to capture baseline data

Progress measures should be established based on the outcomes listed in Figure 1. Table 6.1 provides suggestions about potential indicators and progress measures for each element of the outcome. Ideally, baseline data should be collected before strategies are implemented to be able to see the progress. The “high quality” part of the outcome is partly outside the scope of the policy and action plan as it goes beyond sustainability considerations.

Where possible, existing mechanisms should be used to capture any data that is not already being collected.

Collecting baseline data will be a key challenge given the dispersed nature of the VET sector. It may need to be done at a micro level with RTOs, industry skills councils and others doing activities such as their carbon footprints individually and reporting to a national body annually.

Where possible, financial indicators should report the impact of the sustainability action plan - for example, shifts in operating costs and other funding attributable to reduced resource usage and additional revenue generated as a result of new programs to support emerging industries (eg carbon accounting or renewable energy solutions).

In addition, VTA recommends establishing measures on employment within the sector. Attracting, retaining and developing excellent staff at all levels in the sector is imperative for progressing towards a more sustainable sector. Indicators are usually around staff retention, staff satisfaction/engagement, workplace initiatives and their take-up, injury time and other OH&S issues, adherence to labour relations laws and community involvement. A further important aspect is governance training and professional development for board members, management, teaching and non-teaching staff.

A further consideration is procurement and the supply chain. Leading organisations such as Westpac Banking Corporation have mandatory requirements for their suppliers to meet and can take remedial action if suppliers do not meet sustainability criteria set by Westpac. As the VET sector is a large user of labour and goods (such as printing), this is an important way to show leadership, extend understanding and influence broader positive outcomes. VTA strongly recommends that the supply chain is included in the sustainability action plan.

The table of indicators is based on the outcome in Figure 1 as redrafted by VTA (below).

A high quality and sustainable VET sector that meets the sustainability skilling and workforce development needs of industries, individuals and communities

Table 6.1

| | Indicators | Progress measure | Comments |
|------------------------|---|--|--|
| High quality | Feedback from learners Feedback from employing organizations | Improved feedback on course relevance from learners (this could be at conclusion of learning and on a lag basis) Improved feedback from employing organisations | Develop measures based on relevance to workplace employment and quality of content |
| Sustainable VET sector | Economic indicators • Financial performance (eg profitability, changes in revenue, | Year-on-year change Meet agreed targets (combination of | This part refers to environmental, economic and social |

| | Indicators | Progress measure | Comments |
|--|--|--|---|
| | <p>reduction in operating costs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of organisations (eg student numbers) • Stability of number and success of organisations in the sector <p>Social indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff numbers in the sector • Staff retention in the sector • Engagement of staff who work within the sector • Sector/organisation participation in the community • Professional development hours per staff member <p>Environmental indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon footprint of sector • Water usage • Transport usage • Materials used in office operations and buildings • Energy • Paper and postage • Supply chain engagement | <p>absolute and incremental targets)</p> | <p>indicators</p> <p>Targets can be incremental (ie year-on-year change) or absolute (eg zero waste)</p> <p>Absolute targets are harder to meet but have greater positive impact. They often are used as “stretch goals” (such as zero waste)</p> <p>Targets can measure on a per employee or per learner basis. These measures may look positive but often do not result in real reductions because growth (eg in staff numbers or student numbers) will offset the savings per capita.</p> <p>Consult further with VTA and others before setting any indicators</p> <p>Agree what baseline data should be</p> <p>Refer to the Global Reporting Initiative reference sheet</p> |

| | Indicators | Progress measure | Comments |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| | | | Refer to EPA Victoria's carbon management materials |
| Sustainability skills | <p>Student feedback on relevance of skills learnt to workplace</p> <p>Employing organisation feedback on students' capacity to undertake work required in this area</p> | <p>High correlation between student and employer feedback.</p> <p>For example, xx% of learners and xx% of employers believe that the program equipped them to work with the sustainability issues relevant to their employment field</p> | <p>Review national surveys to establish capacity to include sustainability-focused questions</p> <p>Ensure questions are consistent</p> <p>Negotiate targets with individual VET sector organisations</p> |
| Workforce development needs | <p>The sector systematically consults with industry, government and other key stakeholders to understand, learn and predict future skills requirements</p> <p>The VET sector systematically and periodically assesses the format of program delivery and reports the impacts and likely impacts of further technology development</p> <p>Review each training package for their current sustainability focus and on an ongoing basis.</p> | <p>Type and number of consultations</p> <p>Changes developed/introduced as a result of consultation process</p> <p>Outcomes from reviews and changes made/required as a result of review</p> | <p>This area should be developed in consultation with VTA and other organisations</p> |

Recommendations

17. In consultation with the VET sector, establish performance indicators and progress measures based on the outcome desired for the policy and action plan.

18. Include relevant economic, environmental and social indicators.
19. Include procurement and supply chain indicators.
20. Consult with VTA and other VET sector organisations before establishing indicators and measures.
21. Establish realistic timeframe with consideration of capacity and existing frameworks.

Refer to table 5.1 for specific suggestions and comments on indicators.

7. Stakeholders

The use of the term 'stakeholder' needs to be clarified. For example, in the policy, should it refer to only direct beneficiaries of the VET sector or should it be broader than this?

In many organisations, groups such as the supply chain, environmental NGOs and others are considered stakeholders even though they are not direct beneficiaries.

VTA supports a simple but clear description of stakeholder as 'anyone who influences the VET sector or is influenced by the sector'.

An opportunity exists to provide more information about stakeholders in the background paper – why they are stakeholders and what role they play. Stakeholders can be classified into direct and indirect stakeholders which will address the earlier point of broadening the stakeholder list to beyond just beneficiaries.

The policy and action plan needs to be clearer about to which group of stakeholders it is referring.

Employing organisations should be included as a stakeholder group and learners should be a separate group from the community at large as they have different needs and attributes.

Recommendations

22. Provide more information about VET sector stakeholders in the background paper and the role they play or potentially play as stakeholders.
23. Define the term stakeholder in the policy.
24. Include employing organisations as stakeholders.
25. Separate learners from the community at large.

8. Winning hearts and minds

8.1 A flexible approach

The key to introducing a successful sustainability program that has broad, real and positive outcomes lies with creating a willing mindset with the people who comprise the VET sector. Change will occur when they have the mindset, understanding and the capacity to work out more sustainable solutions in their areas of influence and expertise.

It is unrealistic to assume that all areas of our sector can change in the same way at the same pace. For many, it will be a continuous improvement process based on initiatives that are already in place. For example, in Victoria, Kangan Batman TAFE has been a sustainability leader for some years, signing one of the first sustainability covenants with EPA Victoria in 2004. The National Centre for Sustainability is an active partnership between Sunraysia Institute of TAFE, South West Institute of TAFE, University of Ballarat, Swinburne University of Technology and Challenger TAFE. For others it will be a new journey with significant learning and development required along the way.

In all cases, the process and outcomes will need to be discussed and negotiated within the existing governance structures and strategic frameworks of the organisations involved.

Recommendations

26. Ensure resources are allocated to providing training and development opportunities for people working (at all levels) in the VET sector to develop their engagement in and understanding of sustainability issues.
27. Develop a flexible and consultative approach that will cater for individual needs of organizations.

8.2 Examples of good practices to reduce carbon footprint

The draft policy and action plan focuses on reducing the VET sector carbon footprint. Specific practices to reduce carbon footprint should relate to running of the RTO or related organisation.

Ways to reduce an RTO's direct carbon emissions include moving to double-sided copying, installing sensor and energy efficient lighting and appliances. For buildings, it is about how they are lit, insulated and airconditioned. [EPA Victoria's carbon management](#) material explains that the calculation of carbon emissions can also extend well beyond immediate impacts.

A key to reducing carbon footprints is to generate savings in essential business practices and processes that are systematically repeated. For example, recycling waste is one thing, but actually changing processes to reduce the waste stream in the first place is much more effective.

The policy and action plan refers to technology diffusion and innovation. If the purpose of this is to reduce reliance on transport, this is a positive step, as long as the learning can still be delivered effectively with positive outcomes for the learners.

Recommendations

28. Encourage actions that integrate into core operations.

8.3 VicSuper Pty Ltd – a case study in successful carbon awareness strategies

Since 2001, VicSuper Pty Ltd, one of Australia's largest superannuation funds, has conducted a range of strategies to promote the understanding and need for carbon footprint reduction. Strategies include

- All staff attend periodic compulsory training on sustainability issues. The training deals with global sustainability issues as well as areas that are directly related to the personal and working lives of staff
- The “Biggest Carbon Loser” campaign involved teams, competition and prizes for staff who could demonstrate the most initiatives to reduce their carbon footprint over one month period. This was held for the first time in 2008 and is being repeated in 2009
- Sustainability performance is reported at every monthly meeting to staff
- Regular lunchtime sessions are held with guest speakers
- Staff receive recognition and awards for introducing more sustainable work practices
- Regular events are held with suppliers, customers and other stakeholders including NGOs

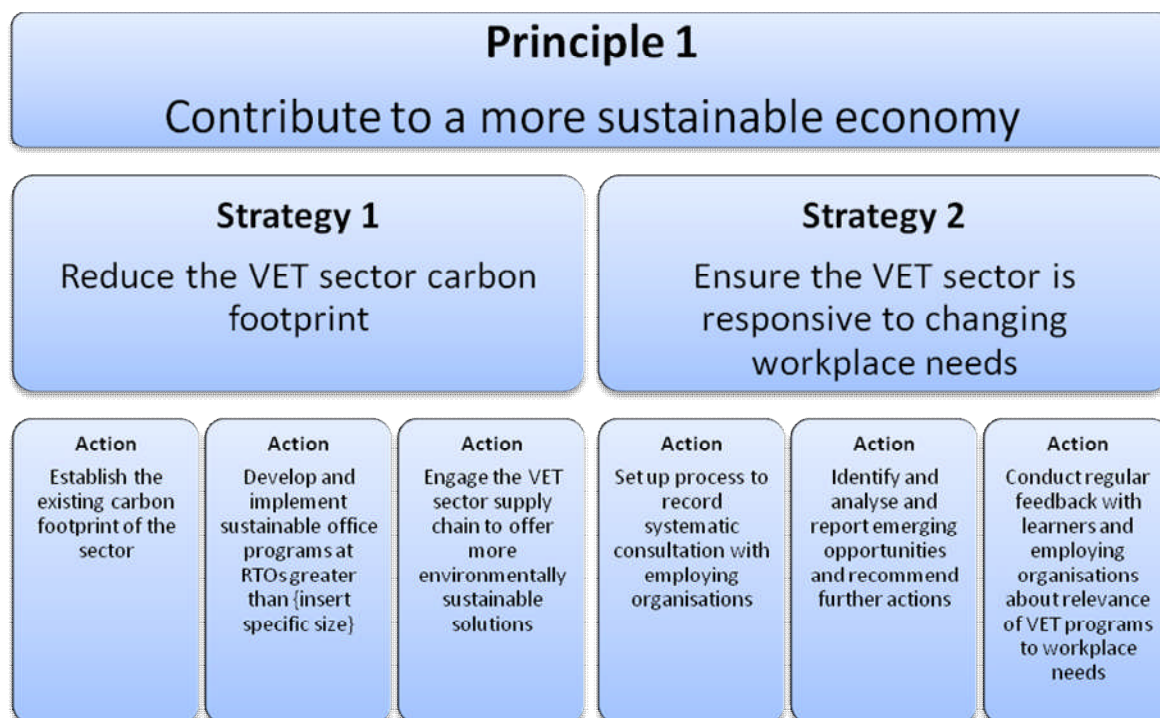
9. Action plan

9.1 Workforce development

We support including the UNEP four main labour market adjustments as outlined in the draft document (3.2.1) and using them to form the basis of a strategy. However, as they stand the actions

are very broad and it would be more helpful to firstly outline a strategy and then to detail a number of specific actions. See diagram 9.1 for a recommended approach.

Diagram 9.1



Other examples of actions are:

- conduct a gap analysis of existing and required skills.
- develop a database of existing and planned technology and its current take up.
- identify new technology options for program delivery.
- identify existing programs incorporating sustainability principles nationally.
- develop a clear map of potential new jobs being created.
- analyse shifts in VET enrolments and programs .

It is important to ensure that the action plan covers all dimensions of sustainability. Whilst VTA supports lowering carbon emissions as a key focus, it is not the only area of importance.

VTA also asks the working group to review the terminology in this section to ensure that the actions are clear and not open to differing interpretations. For example, we are unsure of the meaning and context of “articulation” opportunities in action 3.2.3.4.

Recommendations

29. Develop clear strategies that support the principles in the policy.
30. Develop clear actions that support the strategies.
31. Ensure strategies and actions cover breadth of sustainability issues.

Refer to diagram 9.1 for more details.

9.2 VET sector products and services

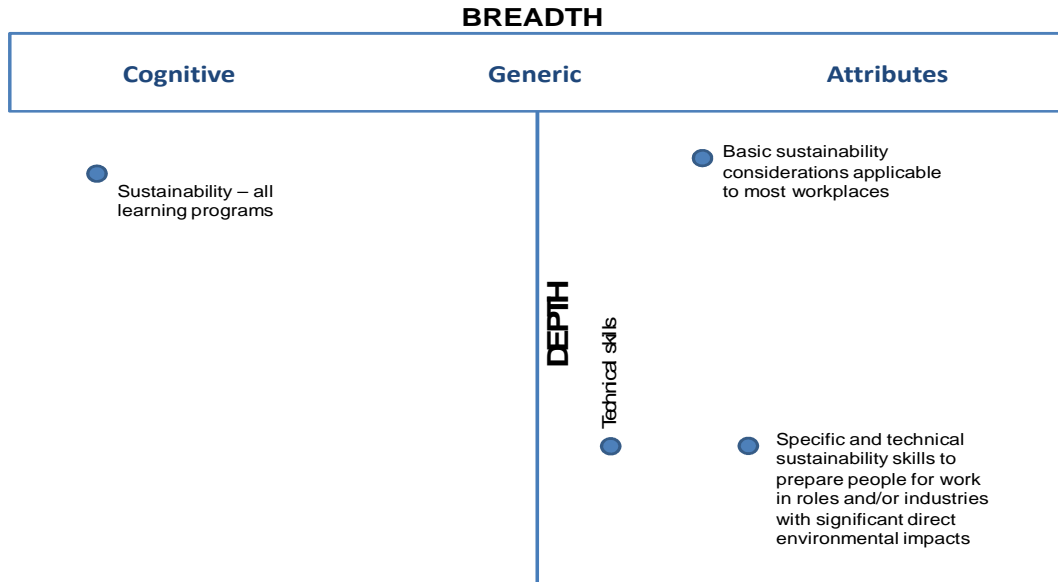
Barriers to uptake of sustainability competencies

One of the key barriers is the lack of qualified personnel to develop relevant and engaging material in this area. Sustainability is in many ways all encompassing as aspects of the environment, society and economy link together which makes it a complex issue to teach effectively.

There is a tendency to assume that “problems” are someone else’s responsibility. In VTA’s experience, it is the same with sustainability issues, especially in respect to climate change. People still don’t tend to relate their own actions to the broader impacts of social and environmental issues so have not identified the need to educate themselves. Organisations, especially in the small to medium business sector are similar.

A further barrier is the focus solely on technical and scientific issues such as climate change and the lack of linking them to social issues such as population and ageing trends and workforce trends. It means that the VET sector must consider the depth and breadth of sustainability competencies required. See diagram 9.2.

Diagram 9.2



Recommendations

32. Establish flexible approach that allows for differing depth and breadth of sustainability skilling.

10. Conclusion

The implementation of a sustainability policy and strategy for the VET sector is vitally important. The sector has the opportunity to help Australia develop a workforce which is more prepared and capable of tackling the sustainability issues of the future. The successful implementation of this strategy will contribute to a more sustainable economy and a more sustainable Australia.

It is also a challenging area and with the diverse needs within the sector, one which will take significant more time and resources to achieve a workable and clear approach. VTA looks forward to further consultation to achieve a positive outcome.

Appendix 1

Sustainability plan – template

1. Scope

Who and what does it apply to?

What policy does it sit under or alongside?

2. Timing

What period does it cover?

3. Definition

(may not need this depending on what is in policy)

Eg Brundtland definition of sustainability

4. Development

How has the plan been put together?

Who has been involved?

5. Sustainability principles

What do you stand for, what will you do. Your approach to sustainability

6. Objectives of the plan

Why do you have a plan?

What are you hoping to achieve from it?

7. Reporting and communication

Who do you need to communicate with about this plan?

How do you want to communicate? (for example, is the full printed strategy the best option or would some visual representation also be good?)

How do you want to report?

Who will you report the results to and how often?

What will you report?

What benchmarks will you use?

What reporting guidelines will you use? (eg GRI)

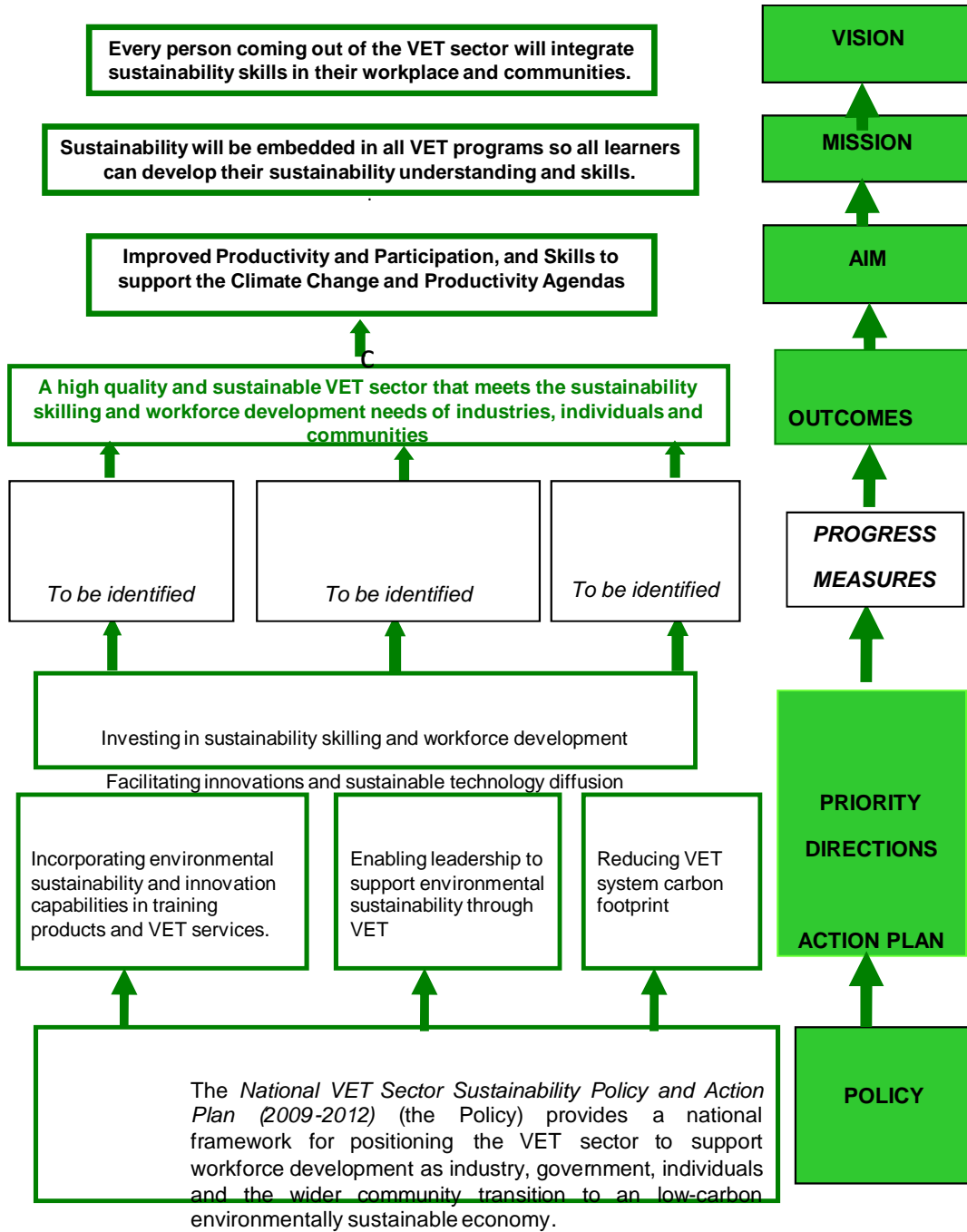
8. Review

How and when will this plan be reviewed?

9. Plan & implementation

| Objective | Strategy | Targets | Performance Indicators | Priority | Resource | Timing | Area of responsibility | Individual responsibility |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------|---|---|
| What are you hoping to achieve? | How are you going to achieve it? | What tangible outcome are you aiming towards? | How are you going to measure it? | Where does it fit in the scale of everything else? | Who or what can help? | | What team/s or areas of the business are responsible? | Who specifically (one person) will drive this strategy? |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

Appendix 2



Appendix 3

VTA Model Sustainability Policy

Victorian TAFE Association

Approved by VTA Association Council 8th May 2008

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1. Introduction

<insert organisation name> recognises its obligations to lead the way towards a sustainable future.

As an educational institution <insert organisation name> has a responsibility to lead society's knowledge, practices and policies on sustainable futures embracing ecological, economic and human well being.

2. Purpose

To provide a policy framework for engaging all the stakeholders of <insert organisation name> in the development of innovative, measurable strategies aimed at embedding sustainability in all aspects of <insert organisation name> operations.

3. Scope and Priorities

The scope of this policy embraces all <insert organisation name> sites and operations, including:

- Development and maintenance of <insert organisation name> infrastructure and services
- Teaching and learning practices
- Associated administrative and operational support functions
- Engagement and participation of the <insert organisation name> staff and students
- Community and industry engagement

The following criteria will be used to determine <insert organisation name> priorities:

- Impact on the physical, biological and social environment
- Compliance with statutory requirements and other environmental and social commitments
- Organisational strategic and operational plans
- Contribution to innovation and definition of best practice sustainable performance
- Availability of appropriate resources, e.g. environmental, technological, human.

4. Definitions

Ecologically Sustainable Design: The use of design principles and strategies which help increase the positive ecological impact of a building, fittings and associated operations.

Education for Sustainability: Embedding learning for sustainability into every aspect of <insert organisation name> operations including workforce planning and development, teaching and learning practices, and community engagement in a synergistic way.

Staff: Including ongoing, contract, sessional employees and independent contractors

Sustainability: Operating and behaving in a manner which equally considers economic, social and environmental responsibility that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Sustainable performance: Operational need, environmental impact and social responsibility are key considerations in the efficient and effective use of resources in a way that encourages sustainability. This includes the use of gas, electricity, water, transport, materials, use and creation of greenspace, workforce planning and development and procurement practices.

5. Policy Statement

<insert organisation name> is committed to improving the sustainable performance of the Institute/organisation as a whole.

It will meet this commitment as follows:

- Invest in its people
- Educate for sustainability
- Engage the community on sustainability
- Foster industry partnerships around sustainability
- Enhance environmental and socially sustainable performance in all aspects of its operations

Invest in People

Through its leadership <insert organisation name> will develop and promote a culture of sustainability across the <insert organisation name> community. This will include among other things:

- Incorporating sustainability performance alongside other key performance indicators of the organisation
- Developing and offering professional development programs on sustainability for all staff
- Engaging with staff in developing innovative ideas on enhancing sustainable performance
- Encouraging flexible employment practices

Educate for Sustainability

<insert organisation name> is committed to using its position as a leading educational institution to improve the knowledge and practices of sustainability in order that learners have an understanding of its importance and the skills to implement sustainable performance. Some of the ways this will be achieved include:

- Contextualising learning programs for sustainability
- Developing courses and undertake research in selected fields of sustainability and environmental study in order to contribute to the body of knowledge in these areas
- Advocate for the incorporation of sustainability learning and teaching within the vocational education and training community

Engage with the community

<insert organisation name> is inextricably linked to the broader community. As such is it committed to participating in community-wide efforts aimed at sustainability. These activities may include:

- Working with the community on projects around sustainability eg transportation, water, waste and green spaces
- Providing forums for the community to learn, discuss and debate sustainability performance
- Promoting best practice examples of integrated sustainability eg students' projects, prototypes and initiatives

Foster Industry Partnerships

Engaging with industry partners committed to sustainability will have a positive flow on benefits to the rest of the community. <insert organisation name> will endeavour to foster industry partnerships around sustainability by:

- Identifying existing and new suppliers with a demonstrated commitment to sustainability
- Engaging with industry to further develop and expand environmental knowledge and sustainability practices
- Seeking industry partners with similar commitments to sustainability

Enhance Environmental Sustainable Performance

The activities of <insert organisation name> impact on the environment. The aim is to promote positive contributions by:

- Reviewing its activities to identify areas of waste and damage to the environment
- Applying a risk management approach to sustainability and developing programs aimed at reducing or minimizing activities which cause the greatest harm

- Ensuring refurbishments, new buildings, other works and equipment purchases reflect ecologically sustainable principles
- Audit performance against relevant legislation and other regulatory standards on sustainability performance

6. Accountability

Successful implementation of the <insert organisation name> Sustainability Policy requires clear identification of the responsibilities and allocation of resources across the organisation.

- The Board is responsible for the approval of the Sustainability Policy and the development of the Sustainability Management Plan
- The CEO is accountable to the Board for achieving the goals, objectives and implementation of the Sustainability Policy and Sustainability Management Plan
- <insert name of position/s> is accountable to the CEO for developing, reviewing the Sustainability Policy; preparing and implementing the Sustainability Management plan and annual reporting on progress towards achieving agreed objectives
- In their areas of responsibility, <insert position titles/s> are accountable to the CEO for planning and budgeting for the implementation of the Sustainability Management Plan

7. Implementation

The <insert organisation name> Sustainability Policy provides the framework for the development of a 5 year Sustainability Management Plan (SMP). A template for the SMP is attached at Appendix One. An annual report on the implementation of the SMP and achievement of key performance indicators will be provided.

Appendix 4

1. About the VicSuper Sustainability Policy

1.1 Introduction

As the corporate trustee and administrator of a large superannuation fund, the activities that VicSuper Pty Ltd (VicSuper) undertakes in our operations and investments result in a broad range of direct and indirect impacts on economies, societies and the environment. To recognise and address these impacts we have adopted sustainability as our central operating principle. This means that sustainability issues are taken into consideration across all VicSuper's operations and activities.

Sustainability is a way of operating and investing that recognises the dependence of the overall health of the economy on the long-term availability of natural resources, a healthy environment, a productive workforce and cohesive societies. We believe that by conducting our operations and investments using the principle of sustainability we can generate greater value for our members and other stakeholders over the long term.

The VicSuper Sustainability Policy is an umbrella framework that sits under the VicSuper Company and Fund Governance Framework and Corporate Governance Policy.

The VicSuper Sustainability Policy is intended to be used as a 'guiding principle' document for any policies or other guidelines that fall underneath it. It aims to clearly identify VicSuper's approach to sustainability and to set out the strategic directions for building a sustainable superannuation fund using seven key strategies. All specific commitments and action plans for the seven key strategies are set out in VicSuper's annual sustainability report and the VicSuper Sustainability Covenant.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the VicSuper Sustainability Policy is to formalise VicSuper's commitments in a guiding policy for all VicSuper policies, procedures and guidelines. The VicSuper Sustainability Policy provides the overall sustainability context within which policies are formed and implemented.

1.3 Objective

The objective of this policy is to increase member and stakeholder value by taking advantage of VicSuper's sustainability opportunities, and by decreasing VicSuper's environmental, social and economic risks.

1.4 Scope

This policy covers the operations and investments of VicSuper Pty Ltd, VicSuper Fund, VicSuper Ecosystem Services Pty Ltd and the trusts for which it acts as corporate trustee.

2. The VicSuper Sustainability Policy

2.1 Building a sustainable super fund

VicSuper aims to contribute to the quality of life of our members through the provision of superannuation products and services, and through the way we address our environmental, social and economic impacts in our operations and investments. It is with this in mind that we developed our vision to build a sustainable super fund. We aim to operate a super fund that is investing in a way that contributes to a sustainable future.

We have identified seven key strategies in our quest to build a sustainable super fund:

1. Deliver value
2. Invest for the long term
3. [Attract, develop and keep great](#) people
4. Maintain sound governance and accountability
5. Continue financial stability and growth
6. Minimise our environmental impact
7. Foster effective partnerships

2.2 The seven key strategies to building a sustainable super fund

All of VicSuper's activities fall within the seven key strategies to building a sustainable super fund. How these strategies contribute to sustainability is outlined below.

1. Deliver value

We believe that maintaining a self-funded quality of life in retirement is a sustainability issue. Improving our members' economic wellbeing will contribute to their ability to enjoy a higher quality of life in retirement. They will be better equipped to access the services they need to support the retirement lifestyle they want, and more actively contribute to society and the economy.

We believe that increasing accessibility to our services is integral to increasing superannuation knowledge for members and employers. We have a strong belief in maintaining our capacity to deliver high quality relationship-based services to members and employers.

We will help members and employers understand their super so that they can maximise their wealth at, and during, their retirement. We will do this by providing superannuation advice and education in a variety of forms and by ensuring we are located in, or visit, areas where our members and employers are, at no extra cost.

2. Invest for the long term

We believe that a long-term focused, low-cost investment strategy that is supported by sustainability considerations will not only provide long-term financial benefits to our members, but will also contribute to building a sustainable super fund with positive social, environmental and economic benefits to all stakeholders.

Our investment strategy supports the position that sustainability issues in environmental, social and governance (ESG) areas will materially impact investment earnings and dividends, which are the primary source of longterm investment returns.

We will maximise the amount of retirement savings that members have by adopting a long-term investment strategy that provides the ability to allocate a high proportion of members' savings to public company shares, as well as providing the flexibility for members to choose the level of investment return volatility with which they are comfortable.

We will seek to implement our strategy with minimum cost in order to maximise the returns that we pass on to members and therefore create greater financial value for them.

We will use the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment as a framework for systematically integrating ESG considerations into our investment strategy.

3. Attract, develop and keep great people

It is our people who develop our benefit plans and provide services to our members and employers. How empowered and satisfied our staff are and the professional development opportunities that we offer them impact significantly on the quality of service that our staff provide to our members, employers and other stakeholders. This is why investing in our employees is a critical part of building a sustainable super fund.

We will provide a positive working environment that is safe, productive and rewarding. We encourage innovation, build capacity, empower our people and make VicSuper a sought-after place in which to work.

4. Maintain sound governance and accountability

With proper attention to risk management and processes that respect the rights of stakeholders, we will be better positioned to improve the economic wellbeing of

members in retirement. Improved economic wellbeing means that members will be equipped for quality of life during retirement.

We will operate a corporate governance structure that protects our members' savings and gives all stakeholders the confidence that they will be treated in an equitable, transparent and honest manner.

5. Continue financial stability and growth

Building the financial assets of VicSuper Fund through increased contributions from existing members and contributions from new members brings with it the potential for greater economies of scale, enabling us to expand our services to members and employers without having to increase our management fee. Responsible and enduring financial stability and growth means that we will continue to contribute positively to society and the economy.

We will continue to build the financial assets of VicSuper Fund in the interests of members and manage our organisation in a financially prudent manner.

6. Minimise our environmental impact

All of our activities have an impact on the environment. We aim to reduce this impact in two ways: through our operations and through our investments (see key strategy 2 for sustainability in investments). Ultimately, this will lead to an increase in our efficiency and a reduction in our operating costs. It will also benefit all our stakeholders and the broader community who depend on a healthy environment now and into the future.

VicSuper subscribes to the precautionary principle. This means that where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

We will manage and minimise our impact on the environment by developing new systems for the efficient use of resources and by being innovative in our thinking to minimise our environmental impact.

Our environment and climate change policies contain greater detail on our approach to minimising our environmental impact.

7. Foster effective partnerships

The impact of our operations does not end with us. If our partners are also committed to sustainability we can be confident that they are looking after their staff, minimising their ecological footprint, and ensuring their businesses are financially sound – while making sure their partners are doing the same. This can lead to substantial flow-on benefits to society, the economy and the environment.

We will foster existing and new partnerships that are mutually beneficial by being transparent and fair in our dealings with suppliers and professional associates, and by integrating sustainability considerations into our partnership decisions.

VicSuper has developed a supplier engagement and purchasing policy to ensure that sustainability flows through our supply chain.

2.3 Our commitments

VicSuper has made a range of specific and measurable commitments and action plans under each of the seven key strategies to building a sustainable super fund. These are detailed in our annual sustainability report and in the VicSuper Sustainability Covenant (environmental sustainability commitments only).

2.4 Reporting

We strongly believe in transparency and accountability in our activities. We will ensure that we publicly report on our activities at least annually. VicSuper reports on our sustainability commitments and performance in our annual sustainability report and through our sustainability covenant. Both of these documents can be found on the VicSuper website www.vicsuper.com.au.

2.5 Responsibility

VicSuper, as the corporate trustee of VicSuper Fund, has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the VicSuper Sustainability Policy. The day-to-day implementation of the VicSuper Sustainability Policy is the responsibility of the Chief Executive and the Executive Manager Sustainability and Education.

3. About VicSuper

VicSuper Fund is one of Australia's largest public offer superannuation funds. With its head office in Melbourne and advice centres throughout Victoria, almost anyone in Australia can become a member.

Appendix 5

Monash University Policy Bank

Environmental Sustainability Policy

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Purpose | This policy demonstrates Monash University’s commitment to the support of environmental sustainability in accordance with environmental legislation and principles. |
| Scope | Staff, students, visitors and contractors at the Australian and international campuses, sites and centres of Monash University |
| Policy Statement | <p>Monash University is a global organisation, committed to excellence, quality and leadership in all of its activities. Monash strives to lead through an innovative approach to research, education and a commitment to social justice, human rights and a sustainable environment.</p> <p>This policy applies to the activities of Monash University and to Monash controlled entities.</p> <p>Monash University respects our relationship with the natural environment and its life-sustaining ecosystems and recognises the need to maintain and restore a rich biodiversity. The University acknowledges the adverse impacts that human activity can impose and takes actions to prevent degradation of our natural systems, while supporting the repair and recovery of those systems.</p> <p>The University aims to lead innovation and practice toward a sustainable environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complying with all relevant environmental legislation and adhering to agreements and standards at local, national and international levels; • setting and communicating meaningful environmental objectives and targets for all aspects of the University to continue to reduce natural resource use and minimise and prevent adverse environmental impacts; • incorporating environmental sustainability principles, awareness and understanding into teaching, research, consultancy and community engagement; and • integrating principles of ecologically sustainable development into all institutional activities. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | Monash University recognises its responsibility to practice and promote behaviours that support activities which contribute to environmental sustainability within the local, national and international community. |
| Supporting procedures | Environmental Sustainability Procedures |
| Responsibility for implementation | Environment Policy Committee Occupational Health, Safety & Environment Facilities and Services Monash Sustainability Institute Heads of academic/administrative units and controlled entities Staff and students with environmental responsibilities Supervisors and managers Staff Students |
| Status | Revised |
| Key Stakeholders | Environment Policy Committee Occupational Health, Safety & Environment Facilities and Services Monash Sustainability Institute Heads of academic/administrative units and controlled entities Staff and students with environmental responsibilities Supervisors and managers Staff Students |
| Approval body | Name: Strategy and Resources Committee Meeting: 8/2007 Date: 04-October-2007 Agenda item: 9.4 |
| Endorsement body | Name: Environment Policy Committee Meeting: 3/2007 Date: 16-August-2007 Agenda item: 2.1 |
| Definitions | |
| Related legislation | Energy Efficiency Opportunities Act 2006 (Comm) Energy Efficiency Opportunities Regulations 2006 (Comm) Environment Protection Act 1970 (Vic) Environment Protection (Prescribed Waste) Regulations 1998 (Vic) Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Comm) Water Industry Act 1994 (Vic) Water Industry Regulations 2006 |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Related policies | |
| Related documents | www.adm.monash.edu.au/ohse/documents/index.html |
| Date Effective | 04-October-2007 |
| Review Date | 04-October-2010 |
| Owner | Manager, OHSE |
| Author | OHSE |
| Contact Person | Ohse Helpline |

Appendix 6

Westpac and the Environment: Our Environmental Policy

Our commitment to the environment

Whether it is providing environmentally responsible investment choices, planting trees, living up to Our Greenhouse Challenge commitments, or simply installing office systems which reduce energy consumption, Westpac is demonstrating that an environmental commitment is utterly compatible with our broader stakeholder interests. Westpac's environmental policy was initiated in the early 1990s.

In 1992, we became one of the founding signatories to the United Nations Environment Program Statement on Financial Institutions and the Environment. At the time we were only one of six banks in the world to do so. We were also the first bank to join the Australian Government Greenhouse Challenge in 1996.

We believe that taking advantage of environmental management opportunities is totally consistent with our objective to enhance shareholder value.

Environmental Policy

Environmental Regulations and Legislation

We will ensure that we meet or exceed all relevant environmental regulations of the countries in which we operate, while at the same time meeting community environmental standards.

Operations and Business Practices

We will conserve global resources through management of water, energy and paper consumption throughout our operations. We are committed to programs in recycling and waste management and to the purchase of recycled products where possible and within reasonable cost boundaries.

Consideration will also be given to environmental criteria in the awarding of contracts to prospective suppliers and the selection of products for all Westpac operations.

Community and Employee Awareness

The environmental catchcry 'think globally, act locally' is something we not only believe in, but genuinely work towards.

That is why we will ensure that every employee understands the importance of incorporating environmental consideration in their daily business activities where this is appropriate. We also encourage employees to reflect their commitment to the environment by supporting staff driven volunteer programs such as 'Operation Backyard', which is helping local communities around Australia improve their environment.

Lending

Westpac has been recognised for our innovation and leadership in socially responsible investment practices and services.

Our appraisal of business customers' applications for finance includes an assessment of the potential environmental risk along with other risks. Where appropriate, specific measures to manage environmental risk aspects may be required as a condition of lending.

National and International Commitments

Westpac is a signatory to the United Nations Environment Program's Statement by Financial Institutions on the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Global Compact and the Australian Federal Government Greenhouse Challenge.

These commitments mean that we actively pursue open dialogue on environmental issues with our stakeholders in both the national and international community.

Environmental Governance

Westpac is actively committed to ensuring environmental aspects are integrated into our business activities and to environmental protection. Our approach is centred on our environmental management system, which includes a set of specific environmental objectives and targets.

Our Board Sustainability Committee oversees management's role in ensuring our environmental commitment is promoted and maintained across the Group in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Our Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for the Group's environmental policies and performance.

Our Environmental Co-ordinator co-ordinates our environmental policy development and ensures that the implementation of its objectives and reporting responsibilities are consistent group wide.

Our Environmental Advisory Group is central to the management of operational issues. This includes incorporating environmental consideration into the lending process for customers across the group, as well as the development and implementation of sector-leading energy management and emissions reduction programs.